

LIPPINCOTT'S

MONTHLY MAGAZINE

January 1909

A Novel of Humor

Complete in
This Number

"The Flight of Robert Sevier"

Relating How, When,
and Where he Flew

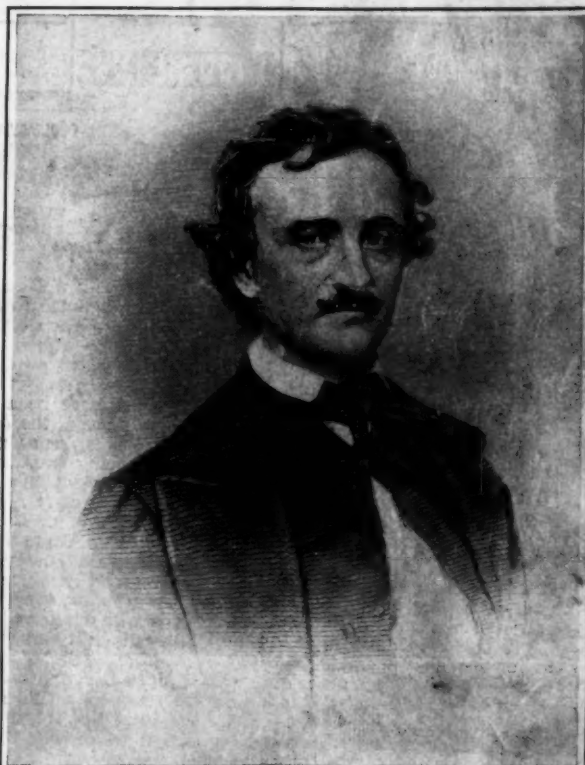
By Grace
MacGowan Cooke

Author of

"Of The Lion's Breed"

"Love Among Thieves"

etc. . . . etc.



EDGAR ALLAN POE

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JANUARY, 1909



THE FLIGHT OF ROBERT SEVIER

RELATING HOW, WHEN, AND WHERE HE FLEW

BY

GRACE MACGOWAN COOKE

Author of "Hulda," "Love Among Thieves," etc.

I.

HE stood back, hypodermic syringe in hand, his fascinated gaze glued to a rabbit into which he had just injected ten drops of the fluid from the glass. The bright-eyed, furry little creature stirred and undulated strangely; yet Sevier could not be sure but that it was merely humping itself into a more comfortable position after the sting of the needle.

Suddenly it began to tremble with violence, then rose, kicking and twitching, until he could see light between it and the table-top. His breath came in gasps as he watched the animal slowly ascend toward the gas-fixture.

"It works," he said in an exultant, vibrating whisper. "It works on the living animal!"

Rigid, his head thrown back, clenched hands dropped at his sides, he remained staring, still half incredulous, at the unhappy rabbit which went aimlessly knocking about the ceiling, after tangling its ears in some sort of contraption the Professor's sister-in-law had made and suspended from the gas-fixture to hold burnt matches. Finally, with a long sigh as of a sleeper awakened, and a half-bewildered glance around him, the experimenter came to himself, took pity on the novel and unique misery of his subject's situation, sprang lightly upon the table,

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and caught it down, securing it by means of the upturned waste-basket to keep it from floating.

"I may as well——"

He looked dubiously about upon a curious gathering of small animals.

"Yes, of course I must try it on all the others," he concluded, "before I attempt it on myself. It may work differently with man."

For a few moments he was feverishly busy with syringe and glass among the reluctant, resentful, or complaining creatures. Then he went back to the rabbit to see if the lightness were dying out of it, or if it would yet float as formerly. He was interrupted in his investigations by the abrupt rise of the guinea pig he had left on the table behind him. The little creature shot up with great suddenness, bumping its nose into the ceiling, and its piteous squeaks reminded Robert to lock his door.

Holding the rabbit under his arm, since he found it was still lighter than the atmosphere, he climbed after the elevated guinea pig. At that moment a small dog mounted slowly, but not silently, before his face. The yelps of this last victim were so harrowing that he feared they would bring interference, and he once more turned toward the door.

But he had got the guinea pig under the other arm now, and was grabbing for the dog as he stepped off the table, when a cat whom he had left sitting decently on the hearth-rug suddenly assumed a most undignified position, standing on her fore-paws, trailing her insulted nose upon the floor, and with hind-legs and tail borne high in the air as she scudded across the carpet under the impetus of the dose he had given her, and—natural conservative—yowled out her horror at this reversal of established custom.

The Professor, pausing a moment, flushed and rumped, admitted that he should not have experimented upon all of his subjects at the same time. Yet it was most interesting to note that the levitation had localized itself in the cat's rearward parts, rendering them buoyant, while her fore-feet still clung to and clawed the carpet. He was so absorbed in this manifestation that he let go rabbit and guinea pig, and even relinquished the dog he had just secured. The latter shot ceilingward just as the cat became light enough all over to go up.

Pussy, with true feline logic, blamed the thing nearest her for her plight. With a tremendous volley of most profane hisses, she struck out at the floating dog, landing on his ear and causing him for a moment to forget that he was in the air.

The humane Professor was about to interfere in this riot when another basket heaved and rolled, and a young pig, with a terrified squeal, emerged from it and ascended about six feet from the floor,

where it hung stationary, vainly stirring the air in a mad attempt to walk, while a second cat joined the other animals in the air.

Feline number one refused to let go of the dog; she had found what she considered firm footing on his back, where she remained, spitting and clawing. In his wild efforts to rid himself of her, the dog turned quite over and floated feet uppermost, while the cat still clung.

The air of the room was full of small animals, growling, yowling, squealing, loudly accusing each other of the broken laws of nature. Sevier, his thick hair wildly rumped, his dark eyes shining with ardor and apprehension duly mixed, ran and jumped and struggled in a vain attempt to get them back into their receptacles. It reminded him whimsically of what the copy-books tell us of spoken words which can never be recalled.

A step on the stair set him to madder efforts. His sister-in-law had not the scientific mind. She regarded his dubious activities, if not himself, with a sort of kindly contempt. She was a notable housekeeper, and the messing up he did was a sore subject between them. He would scarcely have ventured this experiment to-day had he not known that she was at a luncheon. He must get the creatures down and quieted before his performance was found out.

"Me-owl—ye-owl!" went the cats. They had discovered each other now, and were apparently in doubt as to whether they should turn to a mutual attack or band together and exterminate the dog.

"Ki-yi—hi-yi!" supplied the dog. He was used to treeing cats, but not to being treed by them.

The shrill "E-i-i-i!" of the young porker dominated all the other sounds. Only the poor guinea pig bumped its round back and the white rabbit tapped its pink nose on the ceiling in silence. Robert sprang from one article of furniture to another, and grabbed for the floating zoölogical collection, which evaded his hand as particles in a cup of tea evade one's spoon.

"Hello, Uncle Robert!" came a boy's pipe at the door.

"Bobby"—the voice was relieved, but it was not that of a successful scientist; it had the tremor of a small child detected in the jam closet—"Bobby, where's your mother?"

"Over to Miss Alice Kercheval's. Let me in."

"Not now, my boy," returned the Professor, making an unsuccessful grab at the reversed dog. "Ouch!"—as the cat, for which he next reached, sent home a short-arm jab to his wrist. Professor Sevier clapped his hand to his mouth exactly as the small jam-purloining child might have done. "Bobby, you run away and don't interrupt me for half an hour, and I'll give you my rabbit—I'm done with it."

Still sucking the clawed wrist, he looked up to where the innocent

animal floated lightly, and wished that he were as near done with these vociferous creatures in the air about him.

"What you doin', Uncle Rob? You killin' 'em?" inquired Bobby's awed tones from outside.

"No, no; I'm not hurting them—the shoe's on the other foot. Your rabbit's all right as soon as I get it down."

"Well, you must be hurtin' their feelin's pretty bad, then, the way it sounds to me. Will you give me the rabbit and the dog too if I go an' watch for ma and tell you when I see her comin'?"

"I will indeed—ouch!" agreed the Professor with hearty emphasis, as he desperately secured the amalgamated cat and dog, and was liberally clawed in the process.

There was a scamper of small, heavily-shod feet down the stair; the front door slammed. With a sentinel posted, the temptation was irresistible to experiment upon himself with the fluid then and there.

Levitation was subsiding in the little creatures he had failed to pull down, and they one by one slowly landed upon chair, table, or floor, with a queer look of shamed bewilderment in their small faces—a knowledge quite too great for their rudimentary intelligence to hold. He put them back into their baskets, then set forth a vial and sterilized his hypodermic syringe. It was necessary to have light to measure the dose; he raised a shade. To make assurance doubly sure that he was alone in the house, he moved quietly out into the hall and listened. It was very still. No sound of the negress singing in the kitchen—she always went out as soon as her mistress did.

He stepped back into his room with that exaltation of mood which comes to the experimenter as he sets his foot upon unknown territory. Fairly breathless with eager excitement, he went hastily over the calculations as to his bulk and weight and the bulk and weight of the animals upon which he had just experimented, drew the fluid into the syringe, and carefully inserted it under the skin of his arm. Trembling and a little pale, he pressed the piston down until every drop had entered his body.

Standing by the table, resting his hands upon it, he awaited developments.

Professor Robert Sevier held the Chair of Chemistry in a Southern mountain university. He was a tall, dark-eyed, good-looking fellow, sweet-tempered, timid, absent-minded in the ordinary affairs of life and with two objects for his soul's devotion—science and Alice Kercheval, daughter of the president of the college. For two years he had been working on a fluid which, injected into the blood of a living creature, would, he believed, levitate the entire organism, freeing it wholly from the laws of gravitation.

It began with the levitation of fluids by gases. In the course of

some experiments along this line he found that he could send a bladder of water to the ceiling without converting it into steam or any other vapor. He reasoned that if these fluids could be levitated—meanwhile leaving them uninjured for their owner's uses—the human body, which is three parts water, could, too, and that we might thus float in the air—fly—without exterior aid.

A world-shaking discovery this, but the young Professor of Chemistry had no vision of notoriety. He wooed science as he would have wooed Alice, had he the position and the courage to do so, with a pure ardor for the success itself, and no thought about the trappings it might wear, or the incidental advantages it might bring him. There was but one feature of the matter that presented itself to his mind outside the fever to discover for discovery's sake. If he made his name famous among men he would have the right—and might develop the courage—to ask Alice Kercheval to wear it. His pulse drummed; he blushed enthusiastically, to his very soles, and all by himself, at the thought of going boldly to her with his success and offering it and himself to her.

What did it? The blush, perhaps—it was a very robust and far-reaching one; and blushing is a disturbance of the circulation. In the blood Professor Sevier's levitation fluid did its work. All at once as he stood by the table he felt a curious swimming sensation, as of one wading in very deep water. He made an incautious movement, and found himself reversed, hanging head down beside the table and about ten inches above the floor.

("Ha!" said the original cat, with a very profane and insulting epithet. "How do you like the trick yourself? That's it; waggle your hind legs. Much good may it do you!")

He kicked out wildly, and came in contact with some breakables on the table-top.

"Uncle Robert! Uncle Rob! Ma's coming!"

The shrill childish pipe sounded up the stair. Robert Sevier grasped the table-leg with desperate fingers, and pulled himself down to where he could clutch the foot of the heavy sofa, then the edge of a tacked-down rug, holding insecurely to the place that man was born to tread, his feet waving freely above him like joyous pennons. He heard Bobby's step on the stair.

"Ma's got Miss Sally Sorsby and Miss Alice Kercheval with her," volleyed the sentinel. "I heard her say she was goin' to bring 'em right up to your room for something."

Then it occurred to the helpless man that after he had stepped into the hall to assure himself of solitude he had forgotten to lock the door!

"Head 'em off, Bobby!" he entreated. "You head 'em off, and I'll give you *all* my animals."

"I'm sure Robert will do anything you girls ask him to," came his sister-in-law's confident tones. They were passing under the window now, and Sevier, pinching the deep pile of the carpet between his fingers, struggled vainly toward the door on his hands.

"Your Uncle Robert is up-stairs, is n't he?" inquired the same clear, high voice, as the feminine trio turned in at the front hall and came on with a swish of skirts which sounded to the wretched man as loud as the roar of cannon.

Oh, Bobby the faithless—Bobby the all too honest! Alas for the children of the conscientiously inclined, who are taught that truth is a virtue at all times. They are sadly hampered in the affairs of life.

"Yes 'm," agreed Bobby with reluctance, evidently barring their way and halting them on the stairs. "Uncle Rob's up there—he's been doin' somethin' awful to some cats and dogs and pigs—but he said I was to——"

Above-stairs Professor Sevier broke into a profuse perspiration as he inched across the carpet on his finger-ends, sometimes pulling himself forward a foot and floating back nearly two. Happily Mrs. Sevier interrupted her offspring at this point and pushed past him.

"Come on, girls," she said carelessly. "Rob's so bashful that he'll never know what you're asking, but if he once says yes, he'll come and do what he promises."

There were light steps, and little bubbles of sound which irreverent people call giggles, but which some sentimentalist has said are only companionless kisses.

"I know he would keep his promises," said Alice Kercheval's soft voice. "The boys tell me he does wonderful things in the class-room, but he may think it's beneath his dignity to give us amusing experiments at a lawn-party."

Something about those velvety tones gave the Professor power to scratch his way faster towards the door, and he turned the key just as Laura Sevier rattled the knob.

"Ro-bert! Ro-bert!"

"He has gone out, after all," suggested Alice Kercheval gently.

"He's so absent-minded he's liable to forget to answer. Ro-bert!" The Professor's sister-in-law was used to him.

"Do you suppose," inquired Miss Sorsby, in a loud voice, "that he could be absent-minded enough to lock the door on the inside when he went out?" Sally Sorsby was called witty in a college town.

Mrs. Sevier, who had no sense of humor, responded, as she continued to rattle the door, and even kick on it softly with a small suède slipper,

"I should n't wonder at all. It would be just like him. Bobby says

that the other day he put his dress-coat in the bath and tried to hang himself up in the closet."

All this time the Professor had been clinging to the door-knob, panting, imagining they must hear his breath or his heart-beats, fearing desperately that some of his animals would give tongue. But at this speech he suddenly released his hold and began to crawl up the wall as he had crawled across the carpet. With such energy did he scramble that, before he knew it, his fingers were on the picture-rail, and his head in imminent danger of contact with the ceiling.

"I heard a sound," whispered Alice Kercheval's voice outside. "He must be in there. Oh, dear Mrs. Sevier, do let's go away!"

"I know he's in there," asserted Bobby. "He's doin' awful funny things to cats an' dogs an' rabbits. I know, 'cause he would n't let me in either."

"Let's go down-stairs and wait until he finishes his experiments," insisted Alice. "I don't think we ought to interrupt serious work with our frivolous demands. Father says there'd be more great men if women were considerate. He thinks Professor Sevier is going to surprise us all one of these days."

Robert paused, anchoring himself by the picture-rail, to enjoy the sweetness of this speech. Then he became aware that one of his bedroom slippers was sliding off. In vain he waved arms and legs—he could not connect the two members. His body felt like beaten egg-whites; a cold perspiration glued his clothes to that frothy body. He recalled a saying of his old nurse: "Worldly success brings worldly trouble. When you buy a new house you buy a place to set coffin trestles. When you make money you make it to spend for handkerchiefs to sop up tears." Into what humiliation was his great discovery steering him? "Slap!" went his slipper on the floor. Falling from near the ceiling, it made a good loud noise, and the dog barked.

"He's dressing," promptly commented Laura, who lacked delicacy. "I hear him changing his shoes. He won't be long now."

"Oh, I guess not. You peep through the key-hole."

It was Miss Sorsby who made this suggestion. She whispered it, but he caught the words. He remembered that he had been beguiled into escorting this young lady to a college dance; he recollected with a sinking heart that he had forgotten all about her, walked home by himself, and left her in dudgeon and humiliation. He realized how she would enjoy what she might not be quite able to see through that key-hole—the spectacle of him held up in this absurd situation by a power beyond his control.

His other foot was now waving like a wing, and he could not get to it. Its slipper kept loosening a bit; and as he vainly clutched the air above it, it came off and fell. The women heard.

"Oh, dear Mrs. Sevier, please do let us go down-stairs," begged Alice's sweet tones. "This is—why, this is horrid of us!"

"I have to do this way about Robert," explained his sister-in-law plaintively. "He is n't like other men. Now he'll forget we've been here if we don't keep on calling him. Robert, don't wait to lace your shoes clear up—tie them around the ankle and come on. Do come on. I have to do that way, or he would forget while he's lacing them," she explained as they started down the stair.

Given a respite, the Professor was able to exercise some control over his body. With the aid of the picture-rail, he crawled to a mirror-top and perched upon it while he took stock of the situation. It had worked. The levitating fluid had worked. It was a success. The animals he had experimented on now crouched where they had alighted, or crept to shelter. If he could thus render his own body lighter than the atmosphere, and float, the same thing could be done for others. Of course he must experiment until he found that the effects were always uniform and reliable. Also he must assure himself that there were no evil after-consequences.

Then—then the great discovery would be given to the world, and he might speak his mind and heart to Alice Kercheval. How sweet she had been!

In the intoxication of this remembrance, he believed that his invention would revolutionize travel, solve the problem of railway monopolies, give lightning transportation for fruits that rotted on the trees while the sick in great cities perished for their cool, reviving juices. And he had a vision of ropes stretched across states, continents, hemispheres, with travellers floating, guided by this new kind of trolley, to any destination.

The cruelty of the cattle trains would be a thing of the past when the pent-up, anguished beasts would be no longer dragged by tortuous lines across desert and over mountain. Each fat heifer or bucking steer or squealing pig would make private headway, led by the guide-ropes through the safer paths of air. Tail up, legs anywhere—up or down—what a spectacle the animals would present as they were thus transported! Robert laughed a little, softly.

Lost in these reflections, the present was forgotten, until a pair of stout short legs projected themselves into the room by way of the window, the body of a small boy logically following. Bobby ran across the room, and, unlocking the door, had his mouth open to call his mother up, before he noticed where the Professor was.

"Shut that door—shut it!" hissed Sevier from his perch. The awful possibility of being floated out into the corridor head down and dressing-gown inverted, shoeless feet waving, of being thus floated down-stairs, sickened him with fear.

Bobby stopped with very round eyes. The Professor tried to throw himself down from where he sat, but it was no use, he was only in danger of floating, and he grasped the mirror again to anchor himself.

"What kind of a slack rope have you got up there?" his eight-year-old nephew shouted in wild excitement. "Let me call ma and the girls to see you. Oh, look out, Uncle Rob. You're kicking Venus into Apollo." For the Professor's wildly waving feet had swept across the mantel-shelf, and, mindful of other occasions and destroyed bric-à-brac, Bobby added in a lower tone, "Maybe I'd better not call ma just now."

The levitation went out so suddenly that Professor Sevier had the effect of leaping upon his small relative as he cried:

"Don't—call—anybody!"

"You're a regular athlete, ain't you?" Bobby inquired, backing off and eying him. "When did you do your training, Uncle Rob? I did n't know you ever went to the gym. Miss Alice and Miss Sally would be tickled to death if you'd do some o' them stunts at their lawn party. That's what they came over to ask you about."

"Are they here yet?"

"Yep. Ma told me to hustle you down. She said for me to notice that you had all your clothes on, and to bring you along."

"I can't go," protested Robert Sevier, remembering Miss Sorsby. "I wish I could," he added, on recollection of Alice Kercheval. "You tell them that I said I would do anything I could to make their lawn fête a success. And, Bobby"—clutching the small boy as he prepared to depart—"don't you say a word about anything you have seen in this room."

"Huh!" snorted the nephew. "If I could do them stunts I'd be proud. I would n't care who knew it. You'll teach me, won't you, Uncle Rob?"

"Yes—yes! Anything—if you'll only go downstairs and get rid of those women."

II.

"But, father, we were very careful—there were six of us, and we hunted up all the almanacs on the place. I never made such a careful appointment with the moon in my life."

Alice Kercheval's pretty face puckered with anxiety as she looked out over the campus, where Chinese lanterns were proving somewhat inadequate substitutes for a luminary which had incontinently deserted the lawn fête at nine o'clock.

"You should have consulted me about it," said President Kercheval, shaking his gray head. "I have already—er—dislodged three couples from the deep shadows of those trees over there. I will not have you

running about in this twilight with the students—irresponsible young men. If I can find Robert Sevier, I will put you in his care.”

Alice fairly pouted.

“You speak as though I were a package,” she protested. “I can’t help it that we girls got a last year’s almanac. Just because I’m the daughter of a college president does n’t make me all-wise. Any way, I supposed the firmament was the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. I think it’s ridiculous for heavenly bodies to scratch their dates and have new engagement books every year. It strikes me as a very worldly thing to do. Besides, Professor Sevier may not care to be bothered with your daughter.”

The young man himself, having accomplished wonders of parlor magic by means of chemistry, and sufficiently delighted his audience, now made his appearance wandering among the booths, the groups of students and summer girls. Appealed to by the President, it seemed that he would be delighted, and it was no time at all before another couple were seeking the shadows of a little hill that rose near the long main building.

After that first overwhelming success, Professor Sevier had been progressing indifferently with his levitation experiments. The fluid had a tricky way of delaying its action, which puzzled him. The injection made, he would wait sometimes an hour, sometimes ten hours, before getting results. Then there was always the danger that the effect would be localized in some one portion of his frame or another. Last night he sat up until almost dawn, waiting for a large dose to manifest itself in works. He had put in the weary hours thinking of Alice Kercheval, and his nerves were in a state which made the presence of the girl he loved act upon them as a double stimulant.

“Father has been lecturing me because I got hold of a last year’s almanac and thought it was full moon to-night,” the girl began as they strolled quietly along. “I think it was horrid of the man in the moon to turn the whole thing over the horizon like an empty cup on the night of our lawn fête.”

“Perhaps one of the gods threw it,” suggested the young Professor, with unexampled daring. “There’s one of them, I believe, that’s a mighty good friend of timid l—lovers; he knows that men are bolder in the dark.”

The girl laughed a little. “Bolder in the dark!” she echoed. “Father said something like that. What a lot you male creatures seem to know about each other!”

Then the bashful Professor did a desperate deed. He caught the little hand that swung by her side, lifted it, and drew it through his arm.

"Come," he whispered. "Come on. Let's get to the place where I shall not be afraid to tell you—to tell you——"

Her step lagged. She looked over her shoulder at the strings of lights like magnified fireflies among the greenery, the moving figures of men and maids within the circle of their brightness.

"I think the mandolin club is going to play now," she said faintly, as in duty bound.

Of course she longed to hear what he had to say. Of course her little feet were eager to fly to those shadows where he should be bold. But she was a well-brought-up girl, before whose eyes it loomed large that maidenly modesty—a reasonable degree of coyness—was one of woman's chiefest charms.

"Don't you want to come with me? Are you angry?" inquired the Professor, his heart choking in his throat, his knees trembling. "You are angry! Oh, Miss Alice, forgive my effrontery! Please forget all about it, and we'll go back and listen to the band."

Alice could have wept. She stopped short, and went neither forward nor back.

"I don't see why you act as though you thought I were offended," she protested. "I'm not angry a bit. I never was offended—at you."

She turned a little and gave him the glory of her eyes in the dim light.

"You're always so good and kind," she breathed. "You don't seem to me like other men. I—I could n't be angry at you."

"Oh, Alice, don't look at me like that!" burst out the wretched Professor. "I—I——"

"You need n't be afraid to say anything in the world to me," persisted Alice sweetly. She felt that she understood this shy, sweet-natured, gifted man—that she knew him better than he knew himself.

"I want to tell you," the Professor began desperately, realizing that this was more serious even than the levitation experiments—"I've had the idea that if you once knew, I could get on with my work better—that I am trying, for your sake, to rise in the world."

He broke off in sudden panic. He had been so literally trying to rise in the world for some months, he had so greatly feared the ridicule that might follow his experiments, that he listened in an anguish of trepidation to hear her laugh at him.

They had come to the crest of their little hill. Below them the street lamps of the small city silvered a river that curved and shimmered down the valley. Nearer at hand the lights on roof and tower of the college buildings shone out, while lawn and grove and campus were dotted everywhere with the dimly luminous Chinese lanterns. Tents were scattered over the grass like mushrooms. The mandolins had indeed begun, and were playing rag-time softened into elfin music

by the distance. A murmur of voices from the young people moving in and out among the booths came up to them. The air was like thin silk drawn past your cheek.

Alice looked at the velvety shadows toward which they had been travelling, then down at the uniforms of the students—for the little University was a military school. Not one of those boys would have been afraid to say anything that came into his head on a night like this, even to the President's daughter. Yet it was not from one of them that she wanted to hear such words. She was so still that poor Robert Sevier doubted her disclaimers, and believed that she must have been annoyed. He drew a little away from her, yet as her warm hand slipped off his arm, it suddenly dropped into his. The fingers trembled and curled up within his palm like the petals of a rose. He heard her sigh gently. Of course she was grieved—shocked at his precipitancy. In frantic haste to resume the old kindly relations between them, he rushed nervously into excuses.

"It was nothing important I had to ask you," he began with a breezy manner which covered a sinking heart. "I merely thought I'd suggest that you—that you should have some ice-cream with me, Miss Alice."

The girl started as though she had been struck. Then, "Certainly, Professor Sevier," she said with dignity. "But"—with a touch of bitterness—"it was rather absurd for us to toil away up here on this hill, past all the booths, for you to ask me that."

This reduced Robert to abject idiocy.

"You see, I wanted to know whether you would take chocolate or vanilla or strawberry," he explained in tones of the most disproportionate tenderness as they made their way back toward a stand at the edge of the grounds.

She settled her white skirts and her belt with that infinitesimal, haughty little movement that no man ever quite takes the meaning of.

"Chocolate," she said briefly. "Everything is a little dark and off-color to-night."

There was nobody near them but a white-jacketed boy behind the counter. Sevier began eating his cream in great spoonfuls, not in the least aware of what he was doing.

"Miss Alice," he urged humbly, "I believe I displeased you by something I said back there, but really you misunderstood me. I had no idea of its sounding the way it did. I—I hope you won't consider my words—as—that is, consider them seriously."

The girl's very ears burned. He had guessed her secret, then. Her agitation when they stood together in the dark night, curtained round by its soft veiling, and when words that set her heart fluttering with anticipation were uttered by the man she loved, had betrayed her.

Now he was warning her against himself. He was trying to draw back from her too ready, too consenting reception. Had she needed a humiliation so complete? She looked down and trifled with her spoon. Tears swam in her eyes and blinded her.

"Really, I have forgotten what we were talking about," she smiled bravely. "It does n't matter anyhow. Men expect to make some foolish speeches at a place like this, don't they?"

"Oh, don't say that, Miss Alice!" The Professor had bolted his ice-cream, and now began to scrape his empty saucer. "I"—savagely—"I am such an idiot when I try to talk to any lady; and when it is you I— Miss Sally Sorsby told me once that I was a drivelling dolt, and I begin to think she was exactly right."

"Oh, you wanted to confide something to me about Sally Sorsby, did you?" Alice inquired sharply.

The boy behind the counter was bored. He looked away from them, and busied himself with some matters in the back of his box-like stand.

"No, what I said to you has nothing to do with Miss Sorsby," the Professor gathered wit enough to assert. "I'll say it all over, and allow you to judge whom it concerns, and let you be angry if you will. I am trying to rise——"

He broke off suddenly. There came the all too familiar feeling of being in deep water. He was trying to rise indeed. He clutched the edge of the counter and sought desperately to keep his feet on the ground. He perceived Alice looking strangely at him.

"It—it won't stay down," he muttered almost unconsciously, through paling lips.

What could she connect such a speech with except the ice-cream which she had just seen him bolt so violently? What could she do but considerately turn her head away? As she did so, a fellow whom Robert Sevier both feared and hated came strolling into the circle of light about the booth—a debonair and self-possessed young gentleman, who was never troubled by bashfulness, and who flaunted the advantage of having grown up with Alice Kercheval, and graduated from the University several years before.

Dabney Tate was a prosperous insurance man in Unaka now, and notoriously in love with President Kercheval's daughter.

"Such luck to find you alone, Alice," he began eagerly.

"Alone?"

The Professor had in his dismay let go the counter, caught vainly at the post of the booth as he went up, and failed to anchor himself until he came to the flag which floated free above the stand. Here he now clung, head down, and saw the look of offended astonishment

with which Miss Kercheval regarded his vacant place. A gentle sympathy succeeded her first anger.

"Oh, he must be ill!" she cried in alarm. "He was so pale, and he said he could n't—that is," she explained hastily—"that is, Professor Robert Sevier was here with me a minute ago, and I think he was suddenly taken sick. He must have gone that way"—pointing down the hill. "Please follow and find him, Dabney."

When she had sent away her new cavalier she was confronted with an unexpected dilemma. A caterer's boy was spinning on the small counter an aluminum check for forty cents.

"Wha—what's this?" she asked weakly, as he presented it for her inspection.

"Cake-an'-cream-for-two," came the business-like response.

"But you can't charge me that way," she protested. "This thing was got up for the benefit of my church. I helped to get it up. It—why, it's really my lawn fête."

"I'm sorry, miss; but if you helped to get it up you know that this booth is runnin' half and half. 'Tain't all the church's. I can't give away no cream to nobody."

The Professor, hanging above her with crumpled legs and anguished soul, like some new and rather unusual sort of guardian angel, wrapped the stripes of the flag about him and wondered if it would do to call down to her. His hasty consumption of the frozen food must have jarred into action the dose of levitating fluid which had refused to work the night before. He would make a note of that.

But now—might he venture to drop money on the counter? What effect would it produce on the boy to have a rain of small change come out of the air to pay that bill? He dared not do it. He could only pray that the random result of the fluid might die out sufficiently to let him descend before Alice, who was lengthening out her dish bravely, had actually finished it. But he forgot Dabney Tate, and that gentleman was one of the people whom it is well to remember. He came hurrying back now with a glib lie.

"Professor Robert Sevier is sitting down there beside Sally Sorsby, listening to the music," he declared. "The man looks comfortable enough. I don't believe he's sick or has been sick. He's forgotten all about you. Come on, Alice; let's take a little walk up there on the hill."

The occupant of the flag—if a flag may be said to be occupied—almost lost his grip on the staff as he wagged a shaking fist at the serpent who had invaded his Eden and proposed to take his Eve up on the little hill where they two had stood so happily twenty minutes ago.

Should they walk? Alice looked genuinely distressed.

"Dabney," she began in a low tone, "Professor Sevier asked me to have some ice-cream with him, and—and—he forgot to pay when he left. I—I—you—I'll have to borrow the money from you, please."

Above them Robert Sevier writhed and groaned. He turned over on his back and floated, that he might not see. But Tate's voice came up to him in a bellow of crude laughter.

"Asked you to have cream, and then went off without paying for it! Good Lord! what a queer duck that fellow is!"

In the face of Tate's assertion that the Professor was now down listening to the music, Alice forbore to repeat her statement that he had been suddenly ill.

"Are you going to pay—or are you not?" she inquired rather fiercely.

"Pay? Of course I am," Tate said genially. "I'm the kind of fellow that pays; and yours for the asking—for the taking—you know that, Alice."

The practical clerk rang up the money as though it were not the price of another man's honor.

"I thought I seen somebody coonin' it up the post," the white-jacketed youth ruminated as these two left. "Wonder if that long, slim man shinned up there to get out of payin'. B'lieve I'll go and look if he's on the roof."

But he was dilatory, and before he came out to see whether the Professor was perched on the giant Japanese umbrella that served to roof the stand, that unfortunate lover had flung himself by pure force of will towards the branches of an elm beneath which Alice and young Tate were passing, and was scrambling forward to keep up with their laggard pace.

"Your Professor's a queer duck," repeated the young man. "Did you ever hear of the time he made a speech at the faculty dinner? He forgot all about it until his brother hunted him up and dragged him in, and then he got it through his head that he was in his own class-room, and he rose and remarked, 'I hope I shall not be troubled to-day by the levity which you young gentlemen so frequently show in this apartment.'"

Robert gnashed his teeth. The story was almost true. Alice smiled pleasantly in the half-light. She was very angry. To her ears the distant band was playing funeral marches, for there, listening to it in company with Sally Sorsby, sat the man who had seemed all timid, tender devotion under this very elm so short a time ago.

"He certainly is the limit," Tate hurried on, fancying he had pleased the girl because she smiled. "But it looks to me as though his absent-mindedness often comes in sort of handy, as it did to-night. He forgets to pay for cigars that same way."

Robert Sevier did not smoke, yet he thought it better not to shout this information down to confute his defamer.

"His sister-in-law told me a funny story about his peculiarity and a pretty waitress they have down at Snow's. He had been carrying off napkins and silver from the club on this absent-minded racket, and he went down to Snow's, and tried——"

The young Professor was a member of no club, he had never been at Snow's, yet he hung up there in a tall tree-top, his inadequate feet waving like a bird's broken wing, perfectly helpless, while the lying Tate put forth his inventions.

"Don't tell me any more," broke in Alice Kercheval, to his relief, yet greatly to his distress. "Let's talk about something sensible. One would think that such an idiot as that might forget to draw his breath."

Tate laughed a hateful laugh.

"Oh, I never heard of his forgetting to draw his salary," he observed. "You notice he remembered to eat his ice-cream to-night before he forgot to pay for it."

Robert Sevier choked on words unseemly as he appealed to the cosmos for justice. But the two young people were passing from the shadow of one tree to another, and it took all his wind and speed and dexterity to keep up with them. What he thought he might do, what explanation he could offer, from the altitude he had now assumed, is not clear; yet he scrambled along in the tree-tops like a member in good standing of the bandar-log, and saw the young heads close together, heard the low murmur of words, but could not distinguish them.

They paused on the crest of the hill where he had stood with her.

"Allie," said the young insurance man suddenly, "it's no use holding me off and on like this. You're the sweetest girl in the world, but I won't hang around forever begging. You give me a kiss and say 'yes' right now. Why not?"

The Professor's delicacy should have forbidden eavesdropping under such circumstances: yet he listened with all his ears for the reply.

But President Kercheval was a resourceful man. They had a searchlight on the tower of the observatory, and this the old gentleman had set to methodically investigating the shadows of his daughter's lawn fête. Its prying circle of white light suddenly enveloped Tate and his partner. They stood quietly smiling at each other, yet of course the man could not urge his proposition, and when the impertinent glare passed the girl said quietly:

"I'm going down the hill. I must look after matters down there. This is my party, and I'm rather responsible for its success. Don't talk foolishness, Dabney."

"There's no one else, is there, sweetheart?" asked the young fellow, rather put on his good behavior by the turn of affairs. "You don't want to start a museum of freaks by annexing that fool Professor, do you?"

Burning with a sense of her wrongs, Alice declared stoutly:

"No, there's no man in the world—except father—that I care a snap of my finger for. You're a tiresome, unprofitable lot."

"But I'm rather less tiresome and unprofitable than some," returned Tate hopefully. "I'd always pay for your ice-cream."

"Do hush," commanded the girl fretfully. "It's so—oh, I—well, we're both too young, Dabney."

"Too young!" echoed Tate in amazement. "Well, I'll tell you, Alice, age is mighty catching"—with rather grim humor. "We can't live in this world long without catching it."

"You might be as old as the hills," returned the girl snappishly, "and my answer would be the same."

"But you don't hate me, Alice. I think you might give me one little kiss to encourage me—don't you? This is such a nice dark place. Come on, girlie! . . . What's that?"

"That" was language in the tree above their heads—language that no amount of self-control could smother. Nothing but the realization of how much worse it would be to be caught standing on his head in a tree-top than to let matters proceed as they were could have quieted the Professor; but that did silence him, and with a suddenness and completeness that kept his listeners in doubt of their own ears.

"It was one of the cadets," Dabney Tate suggested carelessly, after they had harkened awhile. "We can't be seen here. He did n't know we were so close or he would n't have spoken so loud. Please, Allie, just one kiss—just one. Please—please!"

"No!" roared Professor Robert Sevier, dead to all considerations of prudence. "I forbid it! It—it's wrong, and——"

The two young people fell apart and gazed at each other dumfounded, then all about them. Tate said nothing.

"Is—was—was n't that Professor Sevier's voice?" inquired Alice in astonished incredulity.

She pulled sharply away from her too pressing wooer, and was starting down the hill, when the searchlight on its patient round once more caught the mall up with its moment of high illumination.

A roar from the crowd below announced that many eyes had been following its progress, and told the wretched Professor of Chemistry that they had discovered not only Dabney Tate and Miss Kercheval in the pose of quarrelling lovers, but that he himself was evident pendent in the tree-top.

Then merciful darkness, and the sound of retreating footsteps, as Dabney and Alice hurried down the hill.

The mandolin club, spurred thereto by the loud appreciation of its friends, played through its entire repertory, with many repetitions. One by one the gay voices sank into silence, groups of townsfolk who had come up to assist at the festivity went down the long slope, with much looking over pretty shoulders and calling back good-nights. Lights began to flash out here and there in the dormitory windows. These in their turn were darkened, as yawning boys went about putting out the magnified glow-worms of Chinese lanterns.

It was well into the small hours that the buoyancy began to die out of Robert Sevier's body; he ceased to cruise haplessly among tree limbs and roosting birds, got his feet once more to earth, and stole home to his own room, there to spend what was left of the night concocting notes of explanation and apology to Alice Kercheval.

Toward morning he achieved an epistle which seemed to him hopeful, and went out in the dawn to walk until he could find a messenger to carry it. The reply which he received later in the day contained these words:

You need not keep on telling me about our friendship. I know we are only friends, and can never be anything else. That is all I ever thought we were. It is all I ever wanted to be. But I am not in the least angry with you—why should I be?

Dabney Tate paid for your ice-cream.

ALICE KERCHEVAL.

After his lecture and classes were over, the Professor sought out Mr. Tate and to him proffered forty cents.

"Really," objected that young gentleman, looking exceedingly well pleased, "I beg you not to mention it. It was a privilege, really. Did you know, Professor, that they have an awful story going around up at the college that you climbed a tree and that they found you with the searchlight?"

Without a word, Robert Sevier laid his small silver on Tate's desk and fled.

III.

"ROBERT," began William Sevier, Professor of English and Modern Literature at Unaka College, husband of Laura Sevier, and brother of the man whom he addressed, as the two strolled together across the campus at the close of day—"Robert, though not many years your senior, I have tried to fill the place of a father to you. Hitherto I must say you have been a most satisfactory—a hum—individual; you have not resented plain speaking on my part, and you have taken my

advice. For the first time, I have to-day to talk to you seriously of conduct on your part which grieves me."

Robert regarded his brother apprehensively. William was a dull man; he lacked practicality quite as much as the Professor of Chemistry, and he was without that touch of genius which made the younger man's lack in some sense a grace. The two Seviers looked alike; but in William the brown eyes had faded to gray, the brown hair was stiff and straight, as though it forbore to curl for reasons of dignity and propriety. It was not in the Sevier blood to be unkind, but William had that touch of self-righteousness often seen in men who have done much with a limited endowment.

"I'm sorry if I've seemed to do anything you don't approve," Robert said finally in a low tone.

"I can't approve," pursued William with some heat, "when I learn that you descend to a sort of clownishness during prayers in chapel."

Robert looked relieved. He was sure he had done nothing of the sort.

"Who told you a thing like that?" he demanded brusquely. "What do they say I did?"

The Professor of Literature blushed in the stress of bringing forward such an accusation.

"Uncle Abner—now, Robert, you know he's reliable, if he is a negro and the janitor—Uncle Abner says you wiggled your ears." He looked with a most curious mixture of hopefulness and disgust at the accused. "I remember when we were boys you used to be vain of that silly accomplishment, and—I'm afraid I believe it, Robert."

The young Professor's hand went involuntarily to one of the offending members. He had felt strange twitchings and tremblings in them at various times when his newly invented fluid localized its effect in the head, yet he had not supposed that there was sufficient motion induced to be observable. When this localization took place in an arm or leg, he was aware of it, and guarded carefully, since the member was liable to fly up if he neglected to hold it down, and he had more than once hastened to his room with every appearance of dancing, hopping, stepping six feet high; yet he believed this matter of the ears was his first partial betrayal in public—and William was taking it very seriously.

"I know there are men who hold that an instructor gets on better terms with his students by making himself one of them," the elder pursued in the high monotonous tone that dull people make use of to advise and scold; "but I did not think a Sevier of Sevierville would, at your age, so lower himself as to w-wi-wiggle his ears in chapel."

The houses of the faculty were grouped about an open grassy sweep,

with that of the President drawn a little apart at the head. Robert Sevier had a glimpse of the President's daughter swinging in a low rocker on the vine-wreathed porch. Since the night of the lawn party he had dreaded and fled from sight of Alice Kercheval. Now he gasped, "It shall not occur again, brother," and crowded on all sail for the Sevier cottage. On the doorstep Bobby met them.

"Uncle Robert, you have n't given me my dog yet. He's shut up in your room, and he's been whining all afternoon. Mamma would have let him out, only she said you carried away the key."

"Yes, indeed, Bobolink!" cried the young uncle, glad of the diversion. He bounded up the stairs two at a time. He had been careful to carry away that key, for the small black and tan securely crated up in his room had received a dose of the levitation fluid early that morning, and any time within three hours thereafter its inventor considered that results might be expected.

He lifted the whining little creature from its prison and hefted it judiciously. No, it was the usual weight. He had failed that time. He might as well take the dog down-stairs and give it to Bobby.

It was not until Beppo was placed on the dining-room rug that a strange disposition in his hinder parts to rear themselves aloft, causing him to walk on his fore-legs and apparently dig his nose into the floor, made the Professor wish he had left the dog in his crate.

"He's mad!" promptly shrieked Laura Sevier, skipping nimbly up on a chair, and drawing her crisp skirts about her. "Take him away, Robert. Take him away quick."

"No—no!" screamed Bobby enthusiastically. "It's only dancing. I'll bet Uncle Robert taught it—he can just do anything."

"Dancing!" snapped his mother in disdain. "It's trying to burrow through the floor. Oh, see its legs shake! Look at those legs! If you won't take him away, somebody pull 'em down."

"I guess Bobby is right," put in the young Professor feebly. "The dog does seem to be dancing."

"A thing would n't dance on its head unless it was mad," argued Laura from her perch. "It may go madder and bite Bobby."

"It can't bite me unless I get down on the rug," that young gentleman asserted, not without some color of reason. "I'll bet Beppo has just forgot which legs Uncle Robert taught him to dance on. He's got so many that he gets confused—don't you think so, ma?"

"Why, no—I never imagined anything like that." And practical Laura stared at her offspring, lost in the intricacies of his explanation.

"Well, just think about it now and imagine it," the small boy insisted. "If your arms were legs"—his mother begun hastily and absently to pull down her short sleeves—"and Uncle Robert taught you

to dance on your leg-legs, and then he picked you up and carried you down-stairs right quick, don't you think you might get confused?"

There was no doubt about Laura's being somewhat confused by this speech.

"Bobby," she said sharply, with a very pretty pink in her cheeks, "that kind of talk is thoroughly improper. You can mention legs, but you must n't speak of anybody's legs in particular; certainly not of —of" —the pink in her cheeks deepened—"well, certainly not of anybody's legs in particular. Will you remember that, Bobby?"

"Yes, ma, I will," agreed Bobby. "I'm sorry I mentioned your particular legs; and I won't do it any more."

The dog sank twitching to the floor and looked mournfully over his shoulder at the portion of his anatomy recently levitated. Laura jumped from her chair. William, who had been looking on at the latter part of the scene, shook his head sadly.

"Teaching dogs to dance, and encouraging your namesake to mention his mother's l-limbs—I'm afraid you often forget the dignity of your position, Robert," he said, as they left the small black-and-tan to recover himself, and drew about the table for their evening meal.

During these days Robert Sevier had the sensation of a new swimmer breasting a choppy sea. He was continually in doubt as to whether he could make it. The element in which he found himself slapped him in the face and tingled in his ears; yet he got, too, a mental impression of closing his lips tight, breathing hard, and keeping resolutely on. Since the thought of meeting Alice Kercheval had come to be a horror, he avoided all the small social activities of the little settlement, and devoted every spare minute to his discovery, working at it with feverish activity as a means of distraction, as the one hope of regaining his standing with the girl he loved.

Talk about the Sevier tea table languished, and Bobby finally got down to feed his dog. With the inconsequence of youth, he returned abruptly to a speech of his father's earlier in the evening.

"I wish you'd all let him alone, anyhow," he said querulously, as he bent over his new pet and stroked it, much to his mother's alarm. "He can't be dignified and dance on tables too."

"That dog dignified!"

"No, ma, I mean Uncle Robert. He——"

Then Robert Sevier trembled for his secret. But William put in ponderously,

"Hush, my son; the peculiarities of a member of our family are not to be disclosed, either in that family or outside of it."

The Professor of Chemistry had had enough supper. He mounted the stairs to his room, tingling uncomfortably, and half ready to give up. How absurd he must have looked in chapel, with ears twitching

like those of a horse in fly-time! Suppose somebody told Alice of it. He must—he would—find once for all a way of controlling the fluid; and he spent the rest of the night trying different sizes of dosage in various parts of the body.

But for some reason the action was absolutely unreliable or sulky. An arm would be levitated and fly up; a hand would become light so abruptly that it would twitch almost at a right angle to the wrist; a finger would jerk itself free from its fellows and point jauntily toward the ceiling, but any reasonably expected result held aloof.

In the gray dawn he undressed himself in a mood of absolute despair, put on his night clothing, and crept to that refuge of the unhappy, the harassed—bed.

There comfort found him in dreams. He was floating—floating—floating, relaxed and happy, upon a sea of measureless ether, the world beneath him a mere whirling speck.

He had, in fact, got the full "back-kick" of all the minute doses used during the night, and in the perfect relaxation of sleep he rose smoothly, just as in his dream, and sailed serenely about the ceiling, the bed-clothes trailing across his long form.

Rindy, coming to bring his shaving water, noted first the empty bed. Then her frightened eyes rose to the floating figure over by the window. A light breeze rippled the coverings, and disclosed the face of the sleeping man.

"De good Lawd hab mussy—Marse Robert done riz!" she howled, as she backed abruptly toward the door, spilling the scalding water on her foot, and emitting a mellow African whoop, at which the inventor awoke abruptly from his pleasing dreams.

"Go away—go away quick!" shouted this most modest of men, as he grasped convulsively for his trailing blankets.

These, so long as he kept a true horizontal, rested lightly upon him; but when his contortions of modesty began to fling him into strange positions, they one by one slipped off, and he soared after, grasping vainly for their fluttering edges.

"Judgment day! Judgment day!" yelled Rindy, tearing down the hall. "Marse Robert's done riz—and de kivvers risin' wid 'im!"

Laura Sevier opened her bedroom door, huddling a kimono over her gown as she came.

"Have you gone crazy, Rindy?" she demanded, halting the frantic negress at the head of the stairs.

"He done riz, I tell ye!" asserted that damsel, her eyes rolling, her teeth rattling. "I spec' he gwine to heaven in a chariot o' quilts. Mebbe dat's his soul wid dem big bare feet a-risin'! Oh, Lawd, show mercy on dis house, and let us all rise too!"

"Well, he must n't take the quilts or my best blankets, wherever

he's going," commented practical Laura Sevier, as she turned to hurry down to her brother-in-law's room.

"Robert, put down those bedclothes this minute, if you're going away," she called.

"Don't make him do dat!" pleaded the handmaid, in a sort of strangled whisper. "Don't make Marse Robert do dat. He riz widout bein' dressed to go. He's sich a forgetful somebody, hit's des like his soul not to recomember to put on his clothes."

"He's an absent-minded goose, and he may carry off my bedding if I don't stop him," persisted Laura, forging ahead. Rindy began to whimper and clutch at her head-handkerchief,

"I ain't gwine to stay whar men-folks don't lay in dey beds, but gits up and sails round de ceilin'. I's gwine from here."

This threat roused her mistress to action. After all, Robert could look out for himself; but for the cook to go was a serious matter.

"He's just playing some silly joke on you," she said reassuringly. "Now, you come right along with me, Rindy, and I'll show you."

Robert Sevier heard them coming as he churned the air with pajama-clad legs and got nowhere. He could hear the maid volleying in a hoarse undertone:

"Leggo my awm, please'm, Miss Laury. I do' want to go in dar no mo'. I's been skeered enough."

"Ma—ma! What's the matter?" shrilled Bobby's treble, as he leaped from his bed with unwonted nimbleness and joined the procession.

"Is there—ah—anything I can do?" inquired William's deep tones, as he opened his door; and his brother heard his approaching footsteps added to the others.

When they reached the threshold one last convulsive effort had secured a blanket in which Robert Sevier wrapped the indelicacy of his night costume. Then, for the sake of holding his discovery secret a little longer, he grasped the gas fixture, and with his bare feet streaming out toward them as the breeze from the window propelled him, he gasped through chattering teeth,

"Will you all go away, please? I was just taking my exercises. I'm—er—doing a little training, and——"

"There is n't a feller in the gym that could do that stunt!" crowed Bobby as the Professor remained almost at right angles with the bit of gas-pipe, supporting himself apparently by one hand. Suddenly he felt the levitation give way—he was learning that it had a trick of doing this under stress of excitement or chagrin. With a jerk that almost dislocated his shoulder he came to the floor, presenting a red face that looked up from a convulsed bundle of bedding.

"Good gracious!" ejaculated Laura Sevier.

"He done fell!" cried the maid. "He riz, and den he fell!"

"It seems to me you try difficult exercises," contributed William in a bewildered tone.

"Well, he need n't take my best bed-clothes for a mattress to break his fall," snapped Laura, having got her breath a bit.

Of what avail was it to be a great scientist, to wrestle with the mightiest of world forces and conquer it, when a housekeeper declared you an enemy of clean bedding? Robert arose somewhat sadly to his hands and knees.

"I think you'd better all go away now," he said imploringly.

"Uncle Robert's going to be an acrobat! Uncle Robert's going to be an acrobat!" chanted his namesake as he pranced off to dress.

"Do' know what kind o' bat dat is," grumbled Rindy, following him, "but he did fly some like a bat, an' den some like a buzzard."

William Sevier stood, tall, grave, over the prostrate offender against the proprieties.

"Are you sick, Robert?" he inquired icily.

"Take your wife away!" ejaculated Robert, the slow rage of the gentle nature boiling up at last. "She does n't understand. I want to dress myself and get out of the house. This atmosphere is stifling."

"Laura," rebuked her husband, "you hear what my brother says. Is it not indelicate for you to remain here?"

This view of the situation put Mrs. Sevier to flight with a muffled scream.

"I had hoped you would rise above these eccentricities," the elder brother was beginning, when Rindy, who had crept back to look and listen, yelled suddenly:

"Don' ax 'im to rise, Marse Willie, honey—foh de good Lawd's sake, don' ax him to rise! He's only too apt to 'commerdate yo' about dat!"

The head of the house turned somberly to his handmaiden.

"There must be no servants' talk about this," he counselled her gravely. "My grandfather used to say that greenbacks were like moss on old tombstones—they bespeak forgetfulness. I'll give you a five-dollar bill if you will promise not to remember anything about what has happened here this morning, my girl."

"Yass, suh—yass, suh, Marse Willie; I sho ain't gwine say nothin' to nobody 'bout Marse Robert's doin's," Rindy eagerly promised, and went bobbing curtsies and fingering the money which William had, at his brother's insistence, taken from a bureau drawer in that room.

Yet when, a few moments later, Mrs. Sevier put her head in at the kitchen door to ask if the rolls had risen, the girl screamed and threw her apron over her head.

"For de good God's sake!" she begged. "Don't you nebber say

dat word to me again, Miss Laury. You-all kin take it outen my wages, ef you 'll vow and promise nebber to say dat word in dis yere kitchen. Only de good Lawd knows how I's gwine to stand it to see rolls or bread a-rising atter dis."

"What do you suppose it was?" inquired Laura vivaciously when she and William were safe behind the closed door of the conjugal chamber.

William Sevier, in the early stages of his matutinal toilet, shook his head solemnly, and a man who can be solemn in knit underwear is very solemn indeed.

"I don't know, my dear," he said impressively. "But this I do know; Robert has been applying himself to study and experiment much too deeply of late. If he has injured the brain itself—well—we must face things as they are, and not as we would wish them to be—and he is my only brother. I stand in the position of a father to him. I mean to watch him closely, and at the first sign of actual mental lesion, we must invoke restraint. I had not intended to mention it to you, but I am credibly informed that yesterday in chapel during prayers, he w-wi-wiggled his ears!"

The last words came out in a small, flat diminuendo of William's big booming voice. But practical Laura evidently saw nothing alarming in the statement.

"What do you suppose he did that for?" she asked mildly. "I guess a fly must have lit on one of them. I always say it is a shame to insist on clasped hands in chapel during fly-time—and they've got no screens at the windows."

Her husband regarded her mournfully. They were both without a sense of humor, yet each at times felt that lack in the other.

"I think I can tell you what Robert needs," his sister-in-law observed with rare good sense. "I believe that all he lacks of being just like other people is a nice wife. I wish we could marry him off to some nice girl who would look after him."

Then William shook his solemn head.

"We'll have to get him in better shape than he is now," he declared oracularly, "or no girl of any sort will ever have him." And he sighed.

IV.

It was early morning, but the President of Unaka College was walking across the campus accompanied by two members of his faculty. Sally Sorsby's father, who held the Chair of Mathematics, had sought this interview to bring up informally a charge that he felt would hardly be suitable for mention in an open meeting of the faculty.

"I object to absent-minded men," he rasped away in his harsh,

monotonous voice, that reminded one curiously of a tool going through cross-grained wood. "By some it is held to be a mark of genius. For my part, I should say that the size of the mind itself was the question, and not its disposition to vacate on occasion."

"Now—now—now, friends, let us be generous before we treat ourselves to being just," the gentle old President deprecated. "Absent-mindedness is simply the reverse view of very high concentration. Perhaps young Professor Sevier concentrates on matters outside his classes when he ought to be concentrating on the work in hand. It is a fault of youth. Let us forgive it at this vernal season which starts the sap in even old trees, and sets young things at strange antics."

"How beautiful the view is at this point!" broke in the Professor of Dead Languages, with the idea of creating a diversion. "I never noted the sky-line as near sunrise as this. How those bushes over there break its slope with just the right mass of dark against the blue! What's that?"

"That" was a tall figure darkly silhouetted on the sky-line which Professor Humber had admired, and near the clump of bushes commended by that gentleman. As they looked it lifted one foot from the ground and, in an apparent ecstasy, waved it briskly. The motion of the elevated leg seemed to swing the man's entire body; and as he spun around he caught sight of the three astonished spectators. In what seemed to be an agony of embarrassment, he finally clutched his elevated knee and gradually forced it downward till he stood uncertainly on both feet and smiled foolishly at them. It was Professor Robert Sevier, the man whose eccentricities they had come out to discuss.

"The sap rises also, it appears, in *young trees*," remarked Professor Sorsby drily.

President Kercheval looked distressed.

"I think he is taking exercises of some sort," he suggested, rather unnecessarily. The levitated leg, with a new impulse, was now driving the wretched young man directly toward them. Holding his left knee with both hands, a stiff breeze at his back, he came hopping, his face crimson.

"Why—yes," drawled Sorsby; "I should call that exercise—of a sort. But I should be inclined to inquire what stimulated to that particular variety of motion."

The hopper was almost upon them when his leg gave a twitching motion and jerked up suddenly, the heel apparently smiting him in the back. He fell on his face in the grass, where he lay helpless, letting the lightened ankle wave in waggish defiance.

With one impulse, the three old men turned and walked away.

"He's undoubtedly—full," murmured the Greek and Latin man in a commiserating tone.

"And so early in the morning!" chuckled old Sorsby maliciously. "Now, my dear Kercheval, I think you will have to listen to me at last; and I really believe that I might as well drop this lobbying method and bring the matter up before a faculty meeting."

"Yes—yes; I fear some action will have to be taken," sighed the dear old man who was at the head of the University. "We have to consider the young men—the boys in our hands. It would n't do for them to see a thing like that. Yet I think we never had a more able, agreeable man in this school than Robert Sevier."

"Perhaps one of us might go back—and assist——" began Professor Humber.

The three old fellows looked cautiously over their shoulders.

"He's gone," breathed the President. "He has somehow found equilibrium sufficient to get away." He drew out and consulted a fat gold watch. "It's just about his regular hour," he mused. "I wonder how he will manage. I scarcely know how to meet such a situation as this."

"If you'll let me, I'll meet it for you," broke in Professor Sorsby truculently. "I'll go and speak to that young man, if he has the face to be in his regular class-room in this condition. The college shan't get into a scandal while I can defend it."

The President gave silent and unwilling consent, and the Professor of Mathematics marched away with determined tread. Some action seemed necessary, since students were already beginning to move by twos and threes toward Sevier's class-room for the regular recitation in chemistry.

Robert Sevier had managed to walk or hobble to his desk by sheer, obstinate force of will. He sat with his knee jammed beneath that desk, certain that the levitation was not sufficient to raise the weighted wooden structure. There was the defiance of the hard-pressed in his eye as he faced Sally Sorsby's father.

"Young man," began that worthy, edging close that he might sniff for contraband odors upon the breath of the suspected one—"young man, I want to ask you a question."

"Ask it."

A sudden flux of the levitation into the right arm took place on the instant, and the clenched hand laid upon the desk shot up and swung itself before the interlocutor's face. Robert could not retire it without taking hold of it with the other hand, and this he hesitated to do.

"I beg your pardon," stammered Sorsby, backing away. "I had no

intention of precipitating a quarrel with a man in your condition. I merely wanted to ask——"

Young Professor Sevier seized his wrist with his left hand and pulled it down.

"Now," he said, bracing both his hands against the desk edge and throwing his body forward somewhat to pin them in place, "I should like to know what you mean, Professor Sorsby, by alluding to my 'condition.'"

"Do you feel yourself fit to conduct your classes this morning?" inquired Sorsby, in a lower tone, since the students were straggling in and taking their places on the long forms.

The tone was menacing, but young Sevier met it steadily.

"I do," he said, "or I should not be here in my chair. What leads you to suppose that I should not?"

"Why were you lying on your face in the grass a moment ago, shaking your leg in the air?" inquired Sorsby, in a tone which he vainly tried to maintain at the proper pitch of ferocity.

"Is there anything wicked in such a performance?" inquired the Professor of Chemistry, pushed to extremities in his own defense. "I'm told the ancients exposed the soles of their feet to the god of day as he arose—why not I, if I choose, Professor Sorsby?"

Professor Sorsby had little sense of humor; yet the sheer impudence of this defense, and its unexpectedness from such a source, tickled what little he had. If Robert Sevier was drunk, it certainly was on a peculiar kind of liquor. The older man drew back and thrust his hands far down into his pockets.

"Will you permit me to advise you," he grinned, "not to worship Phœbus in quite so primeval a manner on the campus? Dr. Kercheval wanted me to see if you were fit to lecture. I guess you'll do as well as usual. Good-day."

Robert went through a shaky hour with his class. The fluid was in his system, and evidently at its baffling and alarming method of localizing, so that he never knew what part of his anatomy might become unmanageable. Yet, with the old familiar routine at hand, and little dread of the observation of the boys, he got through successfully. He was a fagged and weary Robert Sevier when, on his way home to lunch, he chanced to spy Alice Kercheval coming up from the library. It was their first direct meeting since the night of the lawn fête, and he decided to stop and speak with her. She looked very trim and sweet in her spotless white linen, with the broad white hat, and his heart began to lose the merciful numbness of recent days. She paused and waited for him where the path divided, one way leading to the Sevier cottage and one leading to her own home. He hurried forward to meet her, his eyes beginning their old trick of uttering unutterable words.

"Miss Alice"—he started his hand in the direction of his hat, and then groaned in utter dismay. It shot past the brim and flung itself upward in the air, nearly jerking him off his feet, and waving a jaunty salute which might have been permissible for a group of students, but which, to his fastidious taste, was well-nigh an insult to a lady. He felt the needle-pricking of the levitation going up his spine to the back of his neck, and spreading itself upon his scalp. His chin rose. He could not have bowed had his life hung in the balance as forfeit. He felt that his head was wobbling about above his collar like a toy balloon—a very scarlet balloon. And his feet—it was hard enough to keep them on the ground, and his best endeavors could do no more than make enormous strides past the girl waiting with large, frightened eyes, the smile of welcome stiffened on her lips, away and up the path to his own home!

"By heaven, I'll never experiment on myself again!" he vowed in bitterness of soul as he pranced along, eating up the distance like him of the Seven League Boots. "I'll go back to the animals. I don't care what Laura says. I will have rabbits in my room. I'll pick up a dog whenever I can, and I'll rush this thing through till it can be made public. I can't bear to see that look in her dear eyes. What a brute she must think me—what a maniac—what a fool!"

As if in reply to this declaration, a Skye-terrier came frisking up to his feet. It seemed a lamb-caught-in-the-bushes miracle to him. He picked up the little creature and hurried across the porch.

"Another dog!" scolded Laura from her sewing chair on the veranda. "Can't you and Bobby see that two-footed creatures bring in more dirt than one woman can sweep out? Why will you insist on getting something with four feet to track up the floors?"

But Robert made no reply. He strode determinedly up the stairs. He entered and locked his door. He set forth vial and syringe. He had intended experimenting upon himself with an injection in each fore-arm, hoping that it would raise him evenly, and tend to draw him forward. He would do the same thing by putting it in the dog's fore legs.

He took up the silken little creature gently, and pricked it skillfully twice with the hypodermic needle, looking to see that just the right amount of solution was injected.

"Uncle Robert," called a familiar voice from an upper balcony outside his window, "what you doing in there? Getting blood corpus-cules? Lemme in."

Without waiting for permission, the boy threw up the sash and stepped inside. He stared at his uncle and the dog with avid interest. The dose took almost instant effect. With a yelp the small creature arose, Robert sprang and grasped for it; but, failing to get a hold upon it,

his finger-ends only gave it a smart shove, so that, its white hair set like beautiful sails, it flowed—that's the only word for it—through the window.

Professor Sevier ran to the sill and looked after it. A small, awe-struck nephew clung to his arm and stared wildly where the disappearing silver speck grew smaller against the sky.

"Gee!" whispered the boy. "Gee, Uncle Rob, what made you sling him so hard? I never saw anybody throw a dog like that. Say—I wish you'd play on our ball team."

"Ro-bert! Ro-bert!" sounded his sister-in-law's familiar, insistent summons. "Miss Sally Sorsby is down here. She says her dog followed you home. She wants it."

"Good heavens!" Robert leaned upon his small nephew and panted. "I do think I'm the most unfortunate man living!"

"I won't tell on you," promised the boy instantly. "You just don't know how strong you are, do you, Uncle Rob? And your strength-kind of gets away with you when you start to slinging things."

He looked curiously from his uncle toward the direction in which the small dog had disappeared.

"Hyacinth—Hyacinth!" A distressed female voice with an edge of shrillness upon it came up from the porch below, then the pitiful attempt of a girl trying to whistle.

"Was that Miss Sally Sorsby's Hyacinth?" moaned Professor Sevier weakly.

"Sure," said the small boy. "Say, Uncle Robert, where do you reckon he'll land?"

"Ro-bert, I told Sally I saw you carrying a dog up-stairs. If it is Hyacinth, she wants him. Stick your head out of the window please; she's waiting to speak to you," called Laura in all seriousness.

"Bobby," gurgled the bedevilled Professor in despair, as he sank into a chair and covered his face with his hands, "you go and tell Miss Sally that I have n't got her Hyacinth, I don't know where her Hyacinth is, and I never expect to know—and I don't care—and I won't try to guess."

And he sat with drooping head, oblivious to the fact that the urchin had gone whooping off to deliver his message verbatim. He sat silent for half an hour, and then the click of Laura's heels upon the stairs aroused him.

"Ro-bert," said Laura herself from the doorway, "come right down-stairs to your lunch. Sally Sorsby's gone. Never mind about her silly dog. She'll find it sooner than anybody else wants her to. I wish all creatures with four feet would disappear. I don't blame you a bit. I suppose"—looking about—"the thing just ran off when it saw your room. The dear gracious knows it's enough to scare even

a dog. Ro-bert—Ro-bert Sevier! Have you been taking hypodermics?"

She pounced upon the outfit spread forth upon the table.

"Robert Sevier, you know better than that—you're not sick. What do you take such stuff for?"

He turned up toward her such a woe-begone countenance that she changed her tone.

"There—there!" she murmured soothingly. "Come down and have some coffee—I've heard that it's an antidote. I'll get Rindy to make you some awful strong."

"Laura," said her brother-in-law, much moved by this unexpected kindness, but too wise to attempt explanation or argument, "I wish you'd let Bobby bring up my lunch—there's a good girl. I don't intend to leave my room this afternoon. You tell William so, won't you?"

She laid a motherly hand upon his forehead. "You don't feel feverish; but I'm not used to—to—what is it they call 'em? Dope fiends? I suppose I can learn how to do for people in that condition, too. I mean well by you, Robert. When I promised to love, honor, and obey William, I intended to get along with his family, whatever they did. But please don't go jumping off the bed and swinging on the gas fixture when Rindy brings up the lunch; it scares her, and she threatens to leave me. I'd send Bobby with it, but he might drop the tray and break the dishes."

"All right—I won't," said Robert humbly. He was a scientist working out one of the most tremendous discoveries of his day; yet when a hen-minded small woman measured him in her pint cup, he admitted that he fell far short.

When he was alone, he closed the window and flung himself miserably into his lounging chair. With lax trailing arms hanging almost to the floor, and with head on breast, he sat and waited for what he knew must come. The hours crept by. Should he trust William with his precious secret? William shared all information with Laura, and Laura was a bosom friend to the world at large, and believed in confidence between friends.

No, when the elder brother came up, he must stave off inquiry as best he could and struggle on alone. To-day's apparent calamity had taught him how to use the levitating fluid to support the body in flight. Had a man been dosed as Hyacinth was, and given some propelling force at his back, he would have gone through that window and off over the tree-tops exactly as the small dog had done. A few more tests, a propeller and steering apparatus, and he would have something that would be worth disclosing.

At regular intervals Laura came knocking at his door, with her

loud, cheerful "Ro-bert—are you all right?" Laura was taking care of him. Rindy brought up his lunch and left it on the floor outside his door, advising him of the fact from the stair-head. Later, dinner came in the same fashion. About ten o'clock that night the inevitable arrived—William knocked at the door, entered, and, laying an affectionate arm about the bent shoulders, began gently:

"My dear, dear brother, I have a very serious matter to discuss with you."

"Laura has been talking to you."

"I'm coming to that," said William, with reluctance. "Do you know where I was this evening? The faculty had a called meeting from which you were purposely omitted."

"Called to discuss me?" inquired Robert, looking up suddenly.

His brother bent his head in acknowledgment. Words were for the moment beyond him.

"Well," inquired the younger man, with what the other deemed undue hardihood, "what did they bring against me?"

"Can you ask?" inquired William Sevier in a trembling tone. "I can scarcely command myself sufficiently to answer you. You are accused of being intoxicated this morning on the campus, and of having shaken your fist at Professor Sorsby when he went to your class-room to remonstrate with you upon your conduct. They also say—it seems incredible, but they say that, in a spirit of revenge for his interference, you inveigled his daughter's pet dog to your apartment and made away with it."

The case seemed black enough.

"Sorsby is an old fool," said Robert heatedly. "He knows well enough I was n't drunk when he talked to me in my class-room. I did n't shake my fist at him. My—my hand got up there and—wagged round some, but I pulled it down as soon as I could."

This explanation sounded so crazy—so much worse than the offense—that Professor William Sevier was brought with a round turn to what his wife had told him when he reached the house.

"I did my best for you, Rob," he said, returning unconsciously to the boyish name. "I told them how you had been overworking of late, and that you were always nervous and absent-minded. I said that I thought a vacation was what you needed, and that maybe they could postpone action until you came back in better shape than you are at present."

Robert Sevier's hand went up to rest affectionately upon the shoulder of his elder brother. The two men waited thus a moment in silence; then William went on in a lower, shaken tone,

"When I got home Laura told me about the—hypodermic syringe. Can't you leave that with me when you go away into the mountains to

gain health and tone? I don't know how those things are broken off, but there must be a way for a good man like you, Robert."

Young Sevier got to his feet.

"I—I'll have to ask you to take my word for it that I'm not a victim of drugs or alcohol, Billy," he said at last, in a tone that held more manly resolution than his voice had known for weeks. "I'll be obliged to take the apparatus with me—I'm conducting some experiments. When they are completed, I'll let you know about it. Meantime, you and Laura—the only kinfolks I've got—will have to stand by me, I reckon. You'll have to trust me in spite of what other people think."

The brothers shook hands solemnly; but as he closed Robert's door after him, William sighed and wagged his head.

"Trust him—when he can't trust himself!" the elder murmured disconsolately. "I guess that's about what people in his situation always ask of their friends."

V.

THE Far Cove neighborhood was a feud district; Robert Sevier knew that when he decided to go there for his vacation. The Sevier estate owned coal lands up in the Turkey Track mountains, and the two Sevier boys had hunted all over those wilds, and fished the clear mountain streams in happy summers and autumns twenty years ago. He thought the spot would offer solitude for the development of his discovery. He knew the disposition of the mountain people to let alone that which lets them alone, and he confidently presented himself at the home of Juletta Gannon and asked for board.

He found the Gannon cabin a double log house surrounded by a bunch of small frame structures made from the raw boards that the portable saw-mill rips out as it eats its way across the flanks of the Cumberlands. Juletta was a widow now, and she took summer boarders. This was not, however, the calamity that it at first might have appeared; for in those high latitudes, where June is still a crisp, cool month, the season was not open yet, and he might hope to be through and on his way home before the first comers began to arrive.

She that had been Juletta Blackshear received him with the eager hospitality of commerce—which had replaced the old freehanded, Arab style of the mountains. He remembered her a little girl in a torn homespun frock, with a tangle of dark curls blowing about her wild black eyes, shy, hardy, fierce, like some untamed woods-creature, holding her own against five half-savage brothers. He found her a tall, lank woman whose height very nearly equalled his own, muscular, weather-beaten, naturally taciturn, forcing a dribble of awkward con-

versation because the hotel-keeper must, and looking old enough to be her own mother.

She addressed him persistently and frequently as "perfesser," evidently intending the title as flattery. She installed him in the best room of the main cabin itself. He would have preferred one of the outlying buildings, but she sternly negatived that, as her conscience would not let her charge so much for them, and told him that every one of them was "done took."

Naturally incurious, she yet had her attention concentrated on him more than was agreeable to the investigator of levitation. He was finally forced to seek some hiding-place away from the house for the mechanical steering apparatus whose parts he had ordered from a skilled model-maker, and which he was now assembling and testing.

Jeff, Jabe, Jate, Jim, and John Blackshear, brothers of the widow, grown from half wild boys to silent, alert, and immensely efficient men of their type, had a highly embarrassing way of appearing, singly or by twos and threes, and taking an interest in the "town feller's" movements. He would come on one of them sitting relaxed under a balsam, with a shoe off and some laconic hint of a gravel that pestered him; or two of them would slouch past, rifle on shoulder, but no game in hand, and give him a shifty-eyed greeting. Once he walked inadvertently out on the whole group drawn up to rest on a big gray boulder, their lean, dark forms and fierce, black, hawk-like profiles silhouetted against an evening sky. He was carrying a bundle of materials at that time; and as he hurried past, anxious to avoid observation, the suspicious glances which followed him aroused even his attention, and showed him that he was under surveillance as a possible revenue spy.

Soon, however, things began happening about the Gannon farm that completely occupied such wits as the widow could bring to bear upon them. Self-reliant as she had always been, she yet welcomed the advent, late one afternoon, of her nearest neighbor, Mandy Card, since she was bursting with information concerning strange doings, and, having bread in the oven, could not well leave to communicate it.

"I been wantin' to git somewhar that I could talk to somebody 'bout the business," she began abruptly, so soon as her visitor was settled in the splint bottomed chair in the kitchen, "sence my hens has went up."

"Lord, you ain't the only one! Mine's up too. I sold the last lot for thirty-five cents apiece," was the unimpressed rejoinder.

"You ain't got the sense you was bawn with—an' you ain't got that right good!" rejoined Juletta Gannon warmly, pausing, towel in hand, fingers rested upon hip. "I tell you strange things is takin' place on this here farm."

"Tain't the first time," commented Mandy Card laconically; but without any evil meaning.

"I 'm a widder," asserted Taylor Gannon's relict, somewhat superfluously. "My man has done left me to do for myse'f as best I can. I kept the *re-sort* alone for six year. I have shore sawn some curious things when these here town folks comes up. But I want to say here an' now that, as a wife an' widder, I have never sawn nothing to compare with what 's agoin' on in this place sence Perfesser Sevier come."

The other woman straightened herself up from where she sat limply in her chair, and a gleam came into her faded eyes.

"You don't mean to tell me that that there town feller is a-courtin' you a'ready!" she said with some animation.

"I ain't plumb shore," replied the widow cautiously. Such an idea had never occurred to her, yet to decline the glory of it would be beyond even such strong feminine nature as this.

"I tell the man about the things I see happening, and he calls them phenomenas. They shore ort to have a name as long as that. I wisht I may never ef two of my settin' hens ain't riz this mornin'—riz, and went to Kingdom Come with they feathers on!"

"Riz up in the air, do you mean?"

"Riz right up offen their nests," confirmed the widow Gannon solemnly. "I was out in the hen-house a-lookin' for aigs, when I seen 'em begin to stir like, and sorter puff theirselves, as a body may say. I'd sot 'em outside in the bushes, beca'se it's gittin' too warm for settin' hens in the house. As I run toorge 'em, they riz right up, scrawling and scratching, and looking awful surprised. They wings was spread out same as they had been over the aigs, and I thort for a spell they was flying, some new way. But I stood there like a fool and watched 'em, and they went up, and up, and up—they got littler and littler, tell they looked like a speck in the sky; an' when I could n't see 'em any more I jest come hollerin' in to find the perfesser, and he said it was phenomenas that the chickens had. They ain't much to spare betwixt that an' cholera—either way, you lose your fowls."

Mandy Card had listened to this recital, her weak mouth open, her underhung jaw dropped, her big, watery blue eyes slightly converging in their stare at the narrator. She crouched in her chair, at the beginning; she rose spasmodically as the chickens began to go up; and her thin chest heaved with waxing emotion. Blev Card's wife was the standby to start the shouting at revivals. The smallest excitement served to set her off, and many an exhorter depended on her to warm up a cold crowd and get the mourners forward. What Juletta Gannon had told was quite sufficient to precipitate an unusually lively performance on her part. With a swift motion she flung her apron over her sun-bonneted head and began to shout:

"Oh, good Lord! Oh, good Lord! It's the last days!"

"Last days!" echoed her hostess, half angrily. "I never thought of sech as that. Them that's worthy shall be caught up into heaven in the last days—but they ain't nothing said in Scriptur' about settin' hens. What's worthy about them? The dominacker one was meaner 'n sin."

"Oh lawsy! don't ax *me*. I don't know. But hit's shore a miracle—the Lord's doin's is shorely in it," quavered the visitor, making ready to clap her hands and sway, and resolute not to be done out of her opportunity to shout. "Mebbe hit's the saints; they've been caught up suddent, and they're hongry."

"Huh!" snorted the widow incredulously. "Must be the African branch of the Church—hongry for chicken, and takin' my hens like that."

Mandy Card dropped the gingham apron a moment to rejoin with naif shrewdness:

"Oh, no, Juletty; niggers would n't never make a mistake and take settin' hens. Hit's shore the white saints you been called upon to feed. Hit's a honor. You ort not to begrudge it."

The widow Gannon looked bewildered and half convinced.

"Begrudge 'em!" she echoed grumblingly, opening the oven door, looking in at her bread, slamming it shut. "I don't know as I do. I'm a religious woman—but I'm a-runnin' a *re-sort*, and you know the first dish a summer boarder asks for is fried chicken. Half the Church, or the whole o' mankind what's gone befo', might be a-campin' in glory jest over my farm. That would n't be plumb fair on a lone widder woman."

"Hit's the end of the world! Hit's the end of the world!" screamed Mandy, getting the proper nervous twitch in her forearms, and beginning to clap as she swayed rhythmically. "Don't the good book say that in that day the fust shall be last, an' the last fust? Chickens is mighty humble, ornery kind o' critters, an' humans is plumb proud an' upstandin'. But in this great day the po' mean, scrawny dominacker settin' hens is tuck up into glory, an' them that thinks so much o' theirselves is left tell the last."

The widow turned on her with dignity.

"Well, you need n't be so turrible excited about it," she said curtly. "We ain't out of this vale o' tears yet. You'd better git home and see if they've robbed *yo'* hen-roos', an' notice ef it makes you as happy as it does when my chickens is took."

Seeking for some sympathetic ears, the shouter got dramatically to her feet, ran down the garden path, and out into the white dusty road. Back to the woman in the doorway came the high, hysterical shout:

"Hit's the end of the world! Hit's the end of the world! We shall all be caught up into glory!"

Juletta Gannon was turning once more to her cooking when she caught sight of a red and white calf, the apple of her eye, behaving strangely over in the small pasture lot. As she snatched up her sun-bonnet and ran toward the animal, she saw that young Professor Sevier was there ahead of her. Down the rickety snake fence it came, apparently trotting along on the top rail. As she got to the bars, the Professor, sprinting after it, caught the animal by one flying foot.

"Hang on!" shouted the woman, "and don't pay no 'tention if you notice the angel that's a-leading him. I can't spar' that calf—now I jest p'intedly can't! The hens they can keep—both of 'em was mighty skinny."

Robert laughed exultingly as he flung an arm over the calf's back and hastily dosed it with the antidote whose exploitation was responsible for this performance. The little fellow capered away on his four feet, shaking an indignant and protesting head, proving that the antidote worked immediately and perfectly. And as he turned to Mrs. Gannon, the happiness which bubbled in the young scientist's mind was ready to overflow on the first human being he met.

"I'll pay you for any live stock you lose through me," he declared eagerly. "The calf's all right; and if a dollar will do for the hens, why, you're all right too."

"Ef what that fool, Mandy Cyard, said was true, and they've went to feed the saints, hit might add some several stars to your crown," debated the widow as they moved toward the house.

At the porch edge she turned, and the two sat down on the doorstep to rest a bit.

"Lawzy—lawzy!" sighed Mrs. Gannon, laboriously making conversation. "I've always heard that some shall live through further days of tribulation, and my summer boarders ain't the kind to be h'isted easy. Most of 'em would have to travel mighty light to get through. Once they come here this summer, it would n't do me a bit o' good to tell 'em my chickens had been caught up to heaven by saints. The men folks would be wantin' to send me to t' other place for makin' up sech a tale. I'd look mighty foolish putting corn-bread and buttermilk on the table, and holdin' forth that the risen Church had done eat all the fried chicken. I reckon hit would n't be business."

Her words went past Robert Sevier's ears, meaningless, signifying no more than the drone of the locust in the catalpa tree, the chirp of a cricket in the grass. Low in the west, over beyond Yellow Old Bald, the sun had left his rear-guard with tattered crimson banners. A little new moon rode easily on the swimming sea of color. Its silver sickle tangled in the branches of a crooked pine tree. When a pine tree is

crooked it is worth the moon's attention. The dreamer sitting on the porch by the hard-handed mountain woman lost himself in the clear exquisite pools of green netted with gold. A song was written for him on the still evening sky, with crotchets and quavers of black against the greenish silver.

His mind had wandered as far afield as Unaka College and a certain dusk, vine-shadowed porch, where a little rocking-chair swung and swayed beneath the light weight of the dearest girl in the world. He forgot who this was talking away, woman-fashion, at his elbow. He told himself that now he was ready to open up his discovery to his brother scientists. The greatest in the land would greet him as one among them. William and the faculty would be made to understand what and who he was. He could go to Alice with all concealment brushed aside, and the gilding of success upon his arms. Perhaps she would be sitting there that night under the wistaria vine, her white frock showing like a patch of moonlight in the shadow. He saw himself walking up the path; and she would lean forward, looking to see who it was; her eyes would deepen and darken, the dimples play in and out of her flushing cheeks; he would stretch out his arms to her and say:

"Now at last I can tell you, dear. You are the one woman in the world for me—there never was anybody else!"

Juletta Gannon was mute for a moment, her weather-bleached face a mask of sheer, dumfounded amazement, her sharp black eyes for once blank and vacant. She looked slowly and dazedly all about her, and took a long breath. As the young Professor, after those murmured words, remained silent, apparently allowing what he had so rashly asserted to stand, she once more filled her lungs, her blood resumed its customary round in arteries and veins, and her faculties awoke. Whereupon she ejaculated in a totally indescribable tone:

"Oh, *Per-fesser!* Who'd 'a' thought that that was what you was up to all this time! Well, wisht I may never. Ef men-persons don't beat all!"

Robert Sevier jumped to his feet and came suddenly back to a realization of his surroundings. But now the widow clung to him in violent agitation. Startled, confused, a little apprehensive, he wondered if it were possible that he had absent-mindedly treated her with the levitation fluid—it was what he did in these days to most animals that could be persuaded to hold still long enough. He noted with alarm what he thought a tendency on her part to rise in the air; and he flung a hasty arm around her waist to hold her down.

"Did you mean it? Did you mean them words you said jest now?" inquired Juletta Gannon, laying hold of his coat lapels and shaking him in the stress of her excitement.

Young Professor Sevier reflected a moment. What had he said? Oh, offered to pay for any loss she had sustained in the way of live stock—proffered her a dollar for the levitated hens.

"Yes—yes," he agreed somewhat impatiently; the widow had a heavy hand, and she hung upon him awkwardly. "Of course I meant it."

"Well—well!" mused Mrs. Gannon in deep satisfaction, as she looked with eyes of proprietorship at the tall and comely young town gentleman who had so suddenly declared himself the captive of her bow and spear. "I been a widder goin' on seben year, and you ain't the first feller that's been projecting round to see would I change my condition; but you been so quare about the business I never sensed what you was at. You've shore got ways with you that a woman person is bound to like; but a lone widder has to be keerful these days. I don't want no foolishness. My folks never was that kind, an' you know I been well raised, ef I do say it that ort n't. You've got to be straight with me."

This sounded a bit odd, but the Professor, lending, as of custom, but half an ear to her words, was still haunted by the fear that he might, in one of his absent-minded lapses, have levitated her, and anxious to bring the conversation round to something that would reassure him.

"I'll prove to you that I'm in earnest"—running a tentative hand down into his pocket. He found no money there. Devoted soul, his last silver had gone to pay the man who brought up from the express office that very afternoon a package of materials, and some new parts for his propeller. But his fingers came in contact with a ring which his sister-in-law had given him for a birthday present. He was averse to jewelry, and had chosen to compromise with Laura by wearing it in her presence and carrying it at other times.

"Here," he said, with a certain relief, "you take this and keep it for the present. It's all I've got by me that's—that's at all to the purpose; and I'll redeem—I'll replace it when I go down to the city."

The widow's fierce eyes fairly bulged. There was no mistake—he meant it. He was offering the ring!

He put the jewel in her hard, brown hand, watching her narrowly and anxiously. His gaze travelled solicitously over her stalwart form. He was not sure he could hold her down if she got started.

"How do you feel?" he inquired with mild deprecation. "Any sensation as if you were in deep water? A feeling of floating? Is your head quite clear? How does your pulse go?"

"Oh, *Per-fesser!*" gasped the widow, slipping the ring finally on a smaller finger than she had at first attempted. "You know jest how it is yourse'f, don't you? You describe my feelin's to a T."

Her head dropped upon his shoulder. And the one-ideaed man, in a panic of fear that she would at any moment start upward, clutched her more tightly.

"It will soon pass," he reassured her. "You'll feel better. You're perfectly safe. I give you my word it will be all right—I'll make it all right."

A cackle of laughter drowned her murmured reply. Under the crooked pine, their tall, lank figures rendered colossal by the tricky light, filed the widow's battalion of brothers. They had come over to pay one of their usual curious visits. It was their custom to drift in thus silently, of an evening, sit about, for the most part mute and watchful, and as silently drift out about nine o'clock. But upon the already overstrained nerves of the University man their advent just at this juncture had the effect of a nightmare.

Suppose their only sister should escape from his clasp and go sailing off before their eyes? Jeff was known to have killed three men, for far less provocation. Jate was a famous marksman, even in this land of gun-handlers. They all held the cave-man's attitude toward homicide—and he had given the last of the antidote to the calf!

When they spoke it became evident that Mandy Card had been talking to them.

"We hearn that you was a-feeding angels from this *hotel*," Jeff chuckled, "but we did n't 'low hit was a young he-angel with curly hair."

The widow forcibly extricated herself from the Professor's anxious embrace. This was not accomplished without difficulty, for he was continually beset by the terror that she would float away in the evening air, and that he would find it hard to explain to the Blackshears.

"Him and me has jest finished our courtin'," she announced solemnly, and Robert saw her abashed grin as she scintillated the ring. "The Perfesser has jest axed me would I have him, and I've jest said I would."

The tall, lean mountaineers ranged themselves along the porch edge, sitting at ease, looking contemplatively up from under their slouched hats at the Professor and their sister. The proposition was somewhat puzzling,—certainly it was sufficiently amazing. But these people, if they are capable of the emotion of surprise, never suffer it to be seen. It is their code to play up to any situation which may be presented to them.

"The preacher's a-gwine to be at Brush Arbor church to-morrow," drawled Jate suggestively. "Might be a good time to settle this thing;" and he added in a lower tone, presumably intended for the ear of his sister alone: "Town folks is tricky."

With the advent of the men, light had begun to dawn on Robert Sevier. Juletta's statement to them showed him plainly that something he had said must have been taken by the widow for a proposal, and that she had accepted him. He was an engaged man! And his prospective brothers-in-law eyed him from the porch edge with the solemn, impersonal curiosity of carnivora not, at the moment, hungry. How was he to explain or even to discuss matters with a tribe of male savages who had small use for language and a deep-seated suspicion of those who purveyed it freely; men who judged motives as the bull bison or the panther might, and who would act from the primitive springs, and with unembarrassed swiftness?

"If you will excuse me," he began, backing toward the door, "I'll go up-stairs. Somehow, I don't believe I'm feeling very well."

"Now, don't you git skeered, honey," Juletta reassured him, edging toward him in the dusk. "I'll send these hyere boys to the kitchen. I'm a widder, I am. I've had experience, and I know how to manage. Jest don't let yourse'f git skeered."

"Looks like hit's Juletty that's a-skeerin' him," growled Jate to Jeff sardonically.

But the miserable Professor put his hand to his head and groaned.

"Did that there fool calf kick you when you was workin' with 'im so noble?" inquired the widow eagerly.

"I'm afraid it did," faltered Robert mendaciously. "I think I'd better go to my room and get some witch-hazel and put on it."

"Lemme see the place—lemme see whar you're hurted, honey," entreated Mrs. Gannon movingly. She was a woman transformed. "Don't you let yourse'f git skeered, now—Rob—Robert."

"No—no! You can't come," protested the Professor almost fiercely.

She eyed him with a curious look. Evidently she resented his putting her thus in the wrong before her kindred.

"Then I reckon we might as well bid the boys in," she said, "and talk this here marryin' business over a little bit before you go."

Robert opened his mouth to speak. The tacit deceit was unendurable to him. But a look at the solid phalanx of suspicious, ignorant, hostile kinsmen on the porch edge closed his lips. There was nothing for it now but to gain a little time. Hating the duplicity thrust upon him, he yet forced a sickly smile.

"In the morning," he managed to mutter with deceitful friendliness. "Good-night——"

"You can call me Juletty now," the widow said positively. Her hypnotic eye was on him; also the eyes of those five brothers, roosting along the porch edge.

"Good-night—Juletta," he gasped, and fled.

Once in his room, he pulled his bed against the door and then pitched his clothes into his valise. His clearing brain gave him a good idea of what had occurred on the porch. Some details may have been wanting, but he knew enough to be aware that it would be best for him to put distance between himself and Mrs. Juletta Gannon and the Blackshear tribe.

When his breathless labors were accomplished he went to the window and looked out. How sweet and still the night lay on the mountain top! The little moon had gone down, but the big, white, steadfast stars were all over the blue-black vault of heaven. And he should be sailing out under them, not waiting breakfast demands, and sight of the resolute widow and of her solidarity of male kindred, whom he felt sure would not now leave the house while he was supposed to be in it.

"Perfesser—Robert—honey," came a voice from behind the closed door. "Yo' supper's ready."

"I think I won't take any to-night—Juletta."

"Air ye bad hurt, honey? Whar did that fool calf hit ye?"

"It's nothing much. Just a little bruise. I'll be all right in the morning."

"Rob—Robert. Won't you open the do' a crack, an' lemme see you?"

"Why, I—I'm—I'll see you to-morrow," the trembling Professor lied.

There was a long silence. He could hear her stir and breathe on the other side of the panels.

"Ain't ye—don't ye want to—ain't you a-goin' to give me nary kiss?" the widow asked, almost humbly.

Shivers ran up bashful, sensitive Robert Sevier's spine. He looked at the big, heavy four-poster, shoved it closer against the door, and set his back to it.

"To-morrow!" he cried. "To-morrow—Juletta." Then in complete, reckless desperation: "Plenty of them to-morrow!"

He heard her heavy foot go slowly back down the stair. Later, when the supper noises had died away below, he heard the six of them move out onto the porch, where they remained, laughing and talking, for hours. When the house grew quiet he strapped his light valise across his shoulders and crept to the back window, swung out of it into the boughs of the apple-tree beneath, and slipped to the ground.

The spotted calf bleated and ran when it saw him coming. Sleepy chickens stirred and clucked a bit in the branches as he passed beneath them. But the dog knew him and was silent. Every nerve atingle, he

crossed the deserted fields back of the buildings, and set his face for the hiding-place of his apparatus. With that in hand he was off for love and freedom.

VI.

It was a regular Cloutie's Croft—the acre in Scotland given over to the devil—that Robert Sevier had chosen for hiding his aerial propeller. A little green depression like a dimple on the cheek of the mountain it was, a dip that held dregs of shadow swimming in the bottom of it all day long.

Squirrels chattered there at noon, and rabbits danced freely in the moonlight; for there no man found space to plant or reap. And in this primitive workshop the young inventor had spent long happy days tinkering at the light, exquisite machine that was to propel and guide his levitated body through space. Here he had spent the past night too; and now in the gray twilight of approaching dawn he drew the machine from its place, slipped the straps over his shoulders, took out his hypodermic and treated both forearms to a dose of the fluid. His valise he had attached to one foot, so that if the levitation failed to raise it he could kick it loose and leave it.

Up he went suddenly in the branches of the tree above him, softly touching the leafy ends, rousing small feathered things that twittered in amazement and semi-friendliness. He turned a lever and made a swift circle above the little dell, looking down toward the ground to see that nothing was left behind. Over his head was a beetling cliff whose forbidding rocks could never have known the foot of man. Far below in the valley lay the tiny hamlet where he had taken the mountain hack for the Far Cove neighborhood; and between it and the great flanks of the mountains themselves were the farms, their tilled land showing like squares on a checker-board.

But he had no time to view these marvels, scarcely breath or thought to realize that he was actually putting his discovery to practical use. He must make a swift flight to Unaka before morning was sufficiently advanced that he could be observed. So, literally rising above his troubles, he set the propeller up notch after notch till he seemed fairly to whistle through the air.

Beneath him the sulky curl of morning smoke from village chimneys apprised him that the world was waking. Five o'clock saw the mass of University buildings on the hill, disentangling gable, arch, and window, till he recognized the Sevier cottage, dropped gently, by means of his carefully replenished and prepared antidote, in a nearby bit of woodland, and with propeller and valise on his back stole to his brother's house, climbed to the upper balcony, and slipped the catch of his own window, so that he was soon fast asleep in his bed.

"To-morrow I'll take the world into my confidence," he told himself as he sank into delicious slumber. "To-morrow—to-morrow I shall receive all I have worked for. To-morrow my trials and troubles shall end—to-morrow!"

As he slept the Professor dreamed. It would seem that nothing more wonderful than his recent experiences could have visited the halls of sleep; yet he had vague, nebulous visions of doors in the sun swinging open to his knock, of star inhabitants flinging up windows, and of blessed damozels leaning on the ramparts of heaven to watch him with his propeller navigating interstellar spaces. Gradually he settled into a more distinct dream of a vast lecture hall filled with people. There were German scientists whose names he was aware of as we are aware of things in dreams, and Frenchmen so great that one wondered to see them in the flesh. All Europe had sent representatives to listen to his revelations. His brother, the faculty, his fellow townsmen, and a few charming women, among whom sat Alice Kercheval—these all waited with shining eyes before a platform on which the dreamer stood and gave an exhibition of his wonderful discovery.

By the perversity of dreams, he found himself telling this vast and inspiring audience all the absurd things he could think of about the action of the fluid. Taken in the side, he advised them, it would raise the body in a twisted, ludicrous fashion. Then he stepped to a stand on the stage which contained vials and syringe, administered a dose to himself, rose free of the floor, and went dangling head downward, with crumpled legs, across the platform, amid gales of laughter from the onlookers. He was not aware that he had arisen from his bed, sought out the old and imperfect supply of levitating fluid which was left behind in his room, and actually taken this dose. But he blushed in his sleep at the thunders of visionary mirth that shook the dream hall.

In point of fact, the imperfect fluid, instead of dangling him about head downward, had exhibited one of its most familiar tricks and refused to work at all. He awoke after a time, unrefreshed, and was appalled to find, when he looked at his watch, that it was late afternoon. He dressed and descended the stairs.

"Why, Robert!" Laura Sevier stood and stared at her returned brother-in-law. Work in the open air, particularly that portion of it which consisted of flights above the tree-tops when hats were a superfluity, had burned his smooth olive cheeks to a rather consistent red; also that, and his poor sleep of the night before, had left eyes and nose sufficiently inflamed to rouse unhappy suspicions in the breast of a strictly practical woman who already harbored most erroneous ideas concerning her brother-in-law, and who knew nothing of flights—those of the fancy or of the body.

"When did you come?" she inquired sharply. "Why, we did n't expect you for a week and more yet."

"This morning," he replied mildly. "I had reasons for returning earlier than I had planned. Could you give me some breakfast? Or lunch, or dinner?"

"Morning?" echoed his sister-in-law. "The early train came in eight hours ago. Where have you been since then?"

"Asleep," he answered honestly.

She took another look at his burned countenance, his reddened eyelids. "Don't you think you'd feel better to lie down again and sleep it off before you try to eat?" she inquired finally.

"Don't you do it, Uncle Robert," vociferated Bobby, pitching himself into the room and upon his tall uncle at one motion. "We've got ambrosia for dinner, and if you wait you won't get any. Come, let me show you."

He dragged Robert, nothing loath, into the dining-room. "Miss Alice Kercheval says ambrosia looks like stars soaked in the milky way," he communicated as they paused before the sideboard.

At the name Robert's heart gave a bound, his sluggish blood began to move in his veins. Then came the familiar sensation of wading in deep water. He leaned forward and clutched the handles of the sideboard drawer. As he swayed back, it came out in his hand, and when he went up he scattered silverware and doilies all over the floor.

The dose of impure fluid taken in his sleep had begun its unreliable, erratic action. It hoisted its unfortunate discoverer to the top of the sideboard, where he came to an upright position, the ends of his toes dipping in the great crystal bowl of ambrosia. He had the appearance of one treading the wine press—or perhaps the orange press is the more exact expression. Bobby drew back with a shout of dismay.

"Uncle Robert, you're ruining the ambrosia! Your slipper's coming off in the cocoanut. Oh, what makes you do that way? I don't like acrobats in my dinner!"

William Sevier's first sight of his returned brother was in this unseemly position, at this occupation.

"Robert, descend at once!" he thundered from the hall doorway. "Laura, shut that door and keep the negroes out. Such behavior is indecent, and must not become public. You'll break the china, Robert."

His blistered face more scarlet from mortification, Robert rose and fell above the sideboard, one foot in the ambrosia bowl, the other raking over small matters of mayonnaise, glasses, and the water pitcher. He felt the juices squelching up and coming over his house slippers. He saw Bobby burst into tears. Laura, a wild look on her pink-and-white face, was at the kitchenward door, holding the knob. He dared

not bend over to attend to matters on the sideboard, lest he should reverse himself in air and hang head downward, as had frequently been the case.

"Never mind, Bobby. Don't be scared, Laura. William, I can explain all of this perfectly. I'll come down in a minute and tell you all about it."

But the spectacle of a demented or inebriated brother climbing down from the sideboard, his feet adrip with orange juice and grated cocoanut, proved too much for Professor William Sevier. Uttering a smothered exclamation, he thrust Bobby away from the hall door, and with bent head bolted from the room.

"I have made a great discovery!" Robert cried after him in loud, excited tones. "I want to demonstrate it to you. I have compounded a fluid which, injected into the living organism, will render the blood lighter than air, and cause the subject to float. I——"

In the hall William turned at bay. Sound of Rindy's approaching footsteps nerved him to make an end of the scene.

"Silence, sir," he ordered. "Have respect for the name you bear, and for your mother's memory. Your face and conduct give ample witness to the levitation of certain fluids. We don't need anything further to explain your present condition. I—I can't believe it! That a Sevier of Sevierville should——"

"Will!" called Laura sharply as her husband groped dubiously his way up-stairs. "It's all very fine for you to be so dignified and everything, but are you going to leave me here to take care of Rob in his present condition? Here's Rindy with the dinner. Just take it back and wait a minute, Rindy. I'd like to know what you expect me to do?"

This appeal brought the dignified Sevier brother scuttling back down-stairs. He laid forcible but not unkindly hands upon the young Professor of Chemistry, and drew him to the floor.

"You mustn't try to talk now, Robert," he said earnestly. "Go to your room till you are in better condition. I won't listen to a word now."

"When will you give me a chance to explain?" inquired Robert somewhat impatiently, as he was towed away up the stairs, unhappily aware, while he clung to William's solid bulk, that he was doing everything to favor their false hypothesis. "I want to know just when. Are you never going to listen?"

"Yes, yes, I'll listen to you when you are fit to talk," said William soothingly, hauling the slighter man with some difficulty around the upper newel post. "I can't abandon you, my dear brother, wayward though you are. Robert, it seems like a providence that there is a great temperance revival going on in the college just now, and the

biggest meeting we have had will be at the tabernacle to-night. If you will accompany me to that place, and there publicly sign the pledge, I will listen to anything you may adduce—afterward. Hush! Not another word. That is the last thing I have to say to you about it."

Robert looked at his brother, and forbore further argument or urgency. But he was hungry, and also a little daunted by the situation. His one hope for comfort lay in practical, unimaginative Laura.

"You're doing me a great injustice," he could not refrain from saying as William all but shoved him through the bedroom door. "You'll be sorry for this. Tell Laura to come up, won't you?"

The calm assurance of manner, the rational words, somewhat startled and almost convinced Professor William; but a glance at the stockinged foot dripping with ambrosia, another look at the suspiciously reddened countenance, hardened his heart.

"I'll let Laura come up if you will promise not to beg her for any intoxicating beverages," he said ponderously—William's most sincere and genuine emotions, it seemed, could only be expressed cumbrously.

"I won't ask for anything more intoxicating than coffee. I'm fearfully hungry," grumbled the culprit sullenly.

"You shall have sufficient food and drink—ah, table beverages—in your own room," agreed William, trying to be fair, but finding it hard not to resort to severity when he seemed able to make so little impression. "I'll ask you to remember that Laura cannot keep servants in the house unless you are more discreet. And Bobby—what sort of example do you set your nephew and namesake?"

"He stamped the stuffin' out of the ambrosia," put in that small boy from the foot of the stairs. But his mother, good soul, checked him.

"Don't make the poor thing feel any worse," she admonished, wiping her eyes. "But you must take warning from your Uncle Robert's condition, Bobby, and never do as he does." She was on her knees, picking up the scattered silver. "You must never touch intoxicating liquor. But you must be kind to him. He's more to be pitied than blamed."

Robert shut the door sharply. This sort of thing might be amusing to an outsider, but it was beginning to become monotonous to the protagonist. Yet he ate heartily when Laura herself brought up his dinner on a dainty tray. Good girl, she busied herself hunting up cold cream for his peeling nose, and making him presentable for his appearance at the meeting where he was to sign the pledge. She seemed quite hopeful that their troubles were nearly over, and Robert sincerely hoped with her.

VII.

PROMPTLY at seven o'clock William knocked at his brother's door. He eyed that brother with covert suspicion when the door was opened, and sniffed the atmosphere of the room, fearing to find that some one had proved faithless and that his charge would not be fit to go out.

"Well, you look pretty decent," he admitted dubiously, as the other stood tall and, in spite of himself, cheerful, prepared for departure.

"You make me feel like a small boy that is under suspicion of stealing jam," the younger brother proffered good-humoredly. "In a few hours you'll be laughing at yourself, Billy."

"I hate to hear you make use of that jaunty tone, Robert," the other rejoined almost rancorously. "You need to meditate and pray. You should pray without ceasing. It is plain to me that you don't realize the horror of this habit that is closing its coils around you. Let us both engage in silent prayer as we walk over to the meeting."

Had it been anybody else but William—but again the younger brother looked at the elder, dense, ponderous, impenetrable, and again refrained from attempted protest or explanation.

It was a solemn affair, that journey across the campus. Robert contrasted his passage above that same space in the morning alone. The levitation was still tingling in his feet, as it had a trick of doing now when the antidote was used. It lifted them high. Any moment, by taking a deep breath, he could rise a foot or two from the ground and float forward for some distance. Now he sighed and stepped beside his brother in silence, greeting the friends whom they encountered with a mere bend of the head, till they came to the great tabernacle, already filled with earnest people.

"The faculty are sitting on the platform," William instructed him in grave, hushed tones, as they reached the door.

"Very well, you go ahead and show the way," Robert agreed hastily. He had caught sight of Alice Kercheval in her white dress. He thought she looked at him; he thought the color rushed to her face as her gray eyes encountered his and were swiftly withdrawn. But Dabney Tate sat beside her, and he scowled as the Professor of Chemistry passed up the aisle.

The meeting was a good one. The lecturer who had been speaking for the past week was a man of ability, and Unaka College was famous for its excellent music. Robert, sitting on the platform, enjoyed his evening as he had not deemed possible. But he was in a mood to praise God and raise anthems unto Him who has left in this old world so many marvels for man in his free state to discover.

The speaker brought his remarks to a close; the appeal was made

that all who needed help to struggle against perverted appetites should rise and ask the prayers of the Christian people there gathered, and after, if so moved, should come down to the speaker's stand and sign the pledge.

William laid a hand on Robert's knee. Old Sorsby fastened his eyes on the Professor of Chemistry. Silvery-haired President Kercheval tried to look unconscious, but failed to dissemble the fact that William had consulted him, and he knew to what end the younger man was brought to the meeting.

"Robert," whispered William energetically, "Robert, my brother, rise!"

And then occurred one of those unexpected and exaggerated responses which make us question whether a friend has the right to urge upon another the course he himself deems proper. How often has man insisted that his fellow should adopt his creed, and then by an adoption so enthusiastic, so complete, so all-embracing as to reverse their positions, been forced to remonstrate for over zeal, where he had blamed for negligence! Robert Sevier shot up to the full of his very considerable height, and stood a moment swaying slightly from side to side. A wild look came in his eyes; he flung out an arm, catching for something solid; but his brother shrank back, and his fingers encountered only the smooth wall. Clutching vainly at this, his face a luminous carmine, the younger Sevier went bumping up beside the window, then above it toward the ceiling. As he scrabbled, vainly snatching at pillar and scroll-work, he had the appearance of climbing like a monkey to the roof. That he was carried by a power beyond his control did not—of course it could not—occur to the shocked, amazed spectators.

"Is he crazy, or is it just a plain drunk?" inquired old Sorsby in a hoarse whisper that was clearly audible through the entire auditorium.

None answered.

"Oh, somebody help that poor man!" wailed a woman's voice. "He'll fall—he'll fall and be killed before our eyes!"

In spite of his terror, William Sevier was angry. That he should have been made a laughing-stock of in this public place seemed so gratuitous. Why could not Robert have said before coming that he would not sign the pledge? Why must he seek publicly to dodge the matter in this ape-like fashion?

Half the audience were on their feet now, watching with appalled eyes while young Sevier rose and rose above them, apparently clinging to the most insecure projections. Glancing below, the Professor of Chemistry saw their terror and realized the cause of it. They were afraid he would fall on them. It might cause a panic.

"There's no danger!" he shouted down to them as he grasped the swinging sash of a ventilator. "I'll go through this and come down outside."

But once on the steep roof, the levitation abruptly subsided—it was the erratic product of a chance-measured dose of the imperfect fluid—and he was left clinging to the gutter, calling miserably for help.

William, who had hurried from the tabernacle overcome by humiliation and distress, looked up and heard his appeal. Recognizing the peril of his graceless brother, he fled to the fire hall just across the square, where a few professional firemen were always on duty to reinforce the volunteer student corps who attended to the safety of the college and grounds.

The hook and ladder outfit rattled noisily, with much clanging of gongs, to the relief of the unfortunate Professor on the tabernacle roof. The entire audience from within had gathered on the campus to see him taken off. He came down in the arms of a fireman, a limp, almost fainting figure. The overdose of impure fluid, the long ride of the morning, the strain and worry of the preceding hours, and the danger and utter mortification of the moment, had proved too much for his sensitive, delicately strung nature. Young Professor Sevier hung supine in the stalwart arms that brought him safely to earth and laid him on the grass.

"Robert—don't you know me?" cried William Sevier, flinging himself on his knees beside the prostrate form. He was now convinced that his brother had suffered some mental shock and lost his reason.

"It was the old fluid," came the peculiar response. "It does n't work well—does n't keep me up."

He took hold of the nearest man and pulled himself to his feet. Dabney Tate, who had forced himself into the front rank of spectators, looked meaningfully from one to another.

"There are a lot of fellows in the asylum that talk just that way," he observed in a quiet tone. "Drugs and drink put 'em there, of course; but they're crazy all right."

William Sevier got to his feet shudderingly, and looked about him like a man dazed.

"Of course this may be a temporary attack," pursued Tate consolingly. "I'll go home with you if you like, Professor Sevier, and help you out with him. He needs a keeper, and you're not fit to look after him, that's plain."

"Why, Dabney Tate—you impudent scoundrel!" shouted Robert, going into one of his infrequent rages. "I certainly do not need a keeper, William. If I did, I could n't let that puppy fill the position."

You promised me that you would listen to my explanations to-night, and you would bring Dr. Kercheval to hear them, if I would sign the pledge. I did my best to, but the old fluid got away with me. I must have had a dose that I did n't know anything about."

"Haw, haw! Well said! They often do!" chuckled the fireman by whose shoulder Robert had pulled himself to a standing position. "I been a nurse at Elm View for ten year, and it's always a dose they did n't know they took, or some such, that upsets 'em."

"See here," remonstrated Tate officiously, and William shuddered as he looked around at the interested, listening faces—"see here, it won't be safe for two physically frail men like yourself and President Kercheval to be shut up in a room with this man to-night. God knows what scheme he's got on hand."

"Wants to cut their throats, most likely," commented the fireman and ex-nurse, with indifferent professional interest.

In despair William turned his back upon the crowd and addressed himself in a low tone to Tate and the fireman.

"What would you advise me to do?"

"It'll be the safest way to take him to the station-house," suggested the fireman.

"No, no," William demurred; "he must be brought to my home. I can't let him be taken anywhere else—yet."

Professor Sorsby pressed through the crowd, and, laying an urgent hand upon William's arm, led him away. As they turned to go, Robert heard the words,

"Come, this is too painful for you. Young Tate will see that he gets home safe, and is cared for. It's not as though it were a sudden attack, my dear sir. You must have been prepared for this."

Robert whirled upon Dabney Tate. "I warn you, Tate," he said fiercely, "I won't endure any more of your foolishness. You've made all of this trouble. I'm not out of my head. You know very well that I'm perfectly sane. I don't want you. I won't have you."

"You're going to need help," remarked the fireman to Tate. "I'll get leave from the fire hall and go with you for a dollar. I'm used to lunatics."

"But this is ridiculous," expostulated the inventor. "You're all crazy."

The fireman nodded, pleased, like any other scientist, to find his particular line of reasoning working out as usual.

"That's just what they all say," he ruminated. "They're sane, and the rest of the world's crazy. Well—mebbe so—mebbe so; but you just catch him under the arm on your side, and we'll run him over to his room and undress him and get him to bed."

Dabney Tate complied rather gingerly. Robert took stock of the

expressions upon the faces about him, and yielded to the situation. Oh, for the strength of Sampson!

And he had looked forward to this day!

VIII.

THE house seemed deserted when Dabney Tate and his assistant marched young Professor Sevier, prisoner fashion, into it, up the stairs and to his old room. William and Laura had evidently not yet returned from the meeting. Robert could fancy them detained by the curiosity and condolences of friends. Bobby was in his little room, which adjoined theirs, sleeping the healthy sleep of childhood. Rindy, who was supposed to be looking after the house and him, had gone out as usual about fifteen minutes after the departure of her master and mistress.

"Wonder if we're going to have to rope this fellow," debated the fireman, whose name turned out to be Friskens. He thrust his hands into his pockets and observed Robert with the impersonal attention we give a bale of goods or a field of potatoes.

"Oh, I guess not," said Tate, backing suddenly away as the Professor of Chemistry threw up his dejected head and stared at the two of them. "He—he might make trouble if we try that. No need to be harsh—unless he gets worse"—hopefully. "I guess we'll just sit up and watch him."

Robert brought his teeth together with a click, and fought for composure. He knew that if he could take the situation lightly, playing the host and offering the men anything they needed for their work, he would eventually convince dull Friskens that their commission was a ridiculous one. In his own mind he was unable to decide whether Dabney Tate was altogether malicious or partly misled. Yet he called in vain for the tone which should have shown them his composure and sanity. All he longed for, the one thing that filled the entire horizon for him, was a chance to demonstrate his discovery in the presence of his brother and President Kercheval; and who would trust a crazy man with a hypodermic syringe and a vial of some unknown drug? Would not his assertions that with it he had overcome the law of gravitation be sufficient to decide adversely any commission of lunacy? As he sat revolving these things in his mind, he heard Laura and William come in.

"Do we do anything in particular?" she was asking in a high, excited voice. "Is there any etiquette about your friends going insane? If there is anything in particular I ought to do, just tell me. Folks don't wear black, do they? I seem to get it mixed."

There was a little stir of lowered conversation when they reached Bobby's room; then Robert heard his namesake's tearful tones:

"You won't send my Uncle Robert to the asylum! If you do, I'm going along. I love my Uncle Robert—so there!"

"Bobby," wheedled his mother, "won't you run down to the door and ask Mr. Tate to see if your uncle has the ring I gave him for his birthday. In his condition anybody might get it away from him if he goes to the asylum. That's a valuable ring. I paid——"

Involuntarily Robert clutched his hands and thrust them behind him. Juletta Gannon was wearing that ring, and he had no rational explanation to proffer as to how she came by it. He was relieved when he heard William's serious accents remonstrating with his wife for thinking of a trifle like that when Robert's reason trembled in the balance.

Then came a penitent Rindy to offer coffee and sandwiches to the men. They were to go down one at a time to the dining-room and help themselves from the sideboard. She said she would leave the coffee-pot on the kitchen range. It was fearfully like the sitting up with a corpse.

Robert chose the time when Tate was down stairs to kick off his shoes and fling himself on the bed with his face to the wall.

"How long do you reckon they will keep him in the house?" asked the fireman when Tate came back, flushed, bright-eyed, wiping his lips and diffusing an odor of supper. Tate glanced at Robert's relaxed form. He may or may not have thought that his rival was asleep as he answered cheerfully:

"I think they'll send him out to Elm View to-morrow. He is n't fit to be in the house with a woman and child."

"Kinda bad, too, ain't it? Nice-lookin' young feller," commented Friskens, with pleasant frankness.

"Oh, I don't know," deprecated Tate, searching over the Professor's table to find matches for his cigar. "Men have to take their chance in this world. There's trouble for everybody. Some get it one way and some get it another. I reckon the variety don't make much difference in the long run, and I never did have any sympathy with people who bring on their own misfortunes, as this man's done."

In his researches he had come upon a picture of Alice Kercheval.

"Hello!"—whistling softly. "That ought n't to stay here, under the circumstances."

Robert started up on his elbow and glared at the speaker. Then it occurred to him that Miss Kercheval would certainly not want her photograph made the subject of a fist fight between two young men, and he dropped back on his couch, silent, as Tate thrust the card into his pocket with the muttered statement that he'd see it got to the proper parties.

The whole thing was so absolutely monstrous that it acted upon its victim with the paralyzing effect of an anæsthetic.

So the night wore on. The two keepers took turns sleeping and watching. Robert tossed from side to side on his bed or lay staring at the ceiling. His weary mind went the round of every plan by which he might gain credence for his statements, and permission that he explain his discovery and test it on himself in the presence of his brother and the physicians who would certainly be summoned to pass upon his sanity. And always he knew that the urgent demand for the hypodermic syringe would mean to them only the drug victim who was habituated to its use and could not do without it, and the description of his marvellous achievements would certainly spell nothing less than lunacy to the country practitioners who might be called in to examine him.

Dawn brought a banging of shutters, and an opening and closing of doors, and a smell of boiling coffee stole up the stairs. Later the telephone bell rang, and William could be heard down-stairs in the back hall, answering.

"Thank you, Dr. Kercheval, yes, he passed a quiet night. I have arranged with Dr. Watkins to bring his partner and make the examination to-day. Yes, the Doctor will come prepared to remove him to his own sanatorium at Elm View; we have n't much doubt as to what his decision will be. You are right. It is hard. He has been brother and son to me. Oh, I understand the safety of Laura and my little boy must come first. If I were a man of means, I should be able to devote my whole time to taking care of my brother. He should n't have to go to an asylum then. But as it is——"

"William," called Robert sharply, sitting up on the edge of his bed in his stocking feet—"William, come here."

It was a haggard, white-faced William, a very wreck of himself, that answered that sharp summons, coming to a stand mutely just inside the door.

"Look here, Billy," began the younger brother doggedly, "you're giving yourself and me a lot of unnecessary pain. Let's just put an end to this ridiculous nonsense. I'm not out of my head. I can prove it in about six minutes. You open my top desk drawer, there's a good fellow, and hand me the vial and hypodermic syringe from the left-hand compartment. Then you get me a rabbit, a dog, or any small beast, and I——"

William turned away with a gesture of dismissal. Robert looked at the grinning Friskens, the well pleased Tate, and realized how senseless his words must have sounded to them. But a scientific man, a relative, who loved him, ought to make some effort to understand.

"It's for a test, Will," he pleaded. "This thing is getting serious.

I may never ask another favor of you. Better do what I request while it's in your power. You'll be sorry if you refuse to listen to me now. Get me the hypodermic syringe——"

"God help you, Robert, I *can't* give you that! It is the root of all your trouble, poor soul. My dear brother, I can't bear to see you like this—I can't! It's not safe for me to be with you. Let these men who are not near relatives handle the case—I'll not come in again;" and with something very like a groan he turned and rushed from the room.

"Close the door, please," said Dabney Tate, full fed with the authority William had so prodigally bestowed.

"His eyes look pretty wild, don't they?" assented Friskens, with that curious air of discussing an inanimate object which sick nurses and attendants of the insane so easily fall into.

"No," returned Robert, making a strong effort to control himself and take advantage of the last chance left him; "I don't look wild at all. I don't look wild, because I'm not wild. I think Mr. Tate knows that I'm neither drunk nor crazy, but he has his own reasons for not wanting to help me. Now, my man," and he addressed himself exclusively to the fireman, "I have made a tremendous discovery. I have compounded a fluid that would make you float around this room like a toy balloon. There should be millions of money in the thing. If that is so, and I ever get my hands on it, I'll give you half if you'll help me out now. Open my desk—or let me open it—and get out——"

"No, no!" hastily interposed Friskens, as the Professor of Chemistry got to his feet and started across the room. "No revolvers and no hypodermics goes with *me*! I've took care of your sort before now. It's all the world for a hypodermic or a razor or a gun, with you all; and when you get it the fool that gave it to you can go and tell Gabriel what made him do it. No, no!"

Robert glanced toward Dabney Tate. Under a thin surface of decent sympathy there was readily discerned a lively personal satisfaction in that gentleman's face and bearing.

"Don't apply to me, please," he remarked rather unnecessarily; "because my sense of duty to your relatives would keep me from furnishing you with the means of destroying yourself or anybody else."

With a quiet disregard which was rather more settling than a sneer, Robert averted his gaze. Rindy came to the door carrying three breakfasts; one on a wooden platter, without knife or fork.

"Where is my shaving water?" Robert inquired of her, as he rubbed a cheek beginning to be brambly.

"Now, look-a-yere, honey," she pacified him, "you cain't have no razzer—you knows you cain't. Dis yere gemman gwine cut yo' meat

foh ye. Would n't even let yo' have a table knife nor a fork—co'se yo' cain't have no razzer."

Robert swallowed the remarks that this brought to his mind, and managed to swallow also the breakfast which Friskens, refusing to trust a fork in the hands of his charge, fed him.

"Tate," called Professor Sorsby's voice from the hall, as the meal was being concluded—"Tate, we need you down here."

Robert heard a low-toned consultation, and when Dabney Tate returned he was not surprised to hear him say:

"We may as well pack up his things before Dr. Watkins comes. Nobody doubts what the verdict will be, and then the doctor can take him on out to the asylum."

William had refused to return. It was like a nightmare to Robert to sit there in the midst of his possessions, and see an ignorant man and a personal enemy plunge their hands into desks and drawers sacred to the memoranda of his research. There were manuscripts in the pigeon-holes, and bundles of notes and data, that nothing but patient years of work would replace. Yet he hesitated to plead or urge the value of these things, since Friskens's ignorance would take his statements as further confirmation of insanity, and Tate might be malicious enough to wish to destroy that which was of value to his rival. He trembled every time they came near the case which contained his propeller.

Powerless he sat and watched the desecrators who handled his clean linen with respect and, with sly grins and nudges, flung his precious test materials into a corner. Dabney Tate, a neat dresser himself, creased the trousers that he packed in Robert's trunk, and was particular to lay the handkerchiefs straight; but Robert had a growing suspicion that if the young man knew the value of the fluid and notebooks that had been pushed in a bundle on the floor at the trunk's end, he would promptly have tossed them into the grate and applied a match.

The telephone had been ringing all morning. Now Tate was called down to answer it. Robert asked Friskens to leave the door open, and listened as his self-appointed keeper replied, evidently to Doctor Watkins:

"Yes, you might come up any time now. Oh, he seems pretty quiet. Delusion? I don't know. He begs pretty hard for a hypodermic, and talks about going up in the air. He says he's got a scheme for making folks fly, and that there's millions in it. No, I have n't felt afraid. I've got a good strong professional nurse with me. Professor William Sevier has seen nobody—he's entirely prostrated. But he will meet you here. Yes, he will be present at the examination—though he dreads— Yes, maybe so. Yes, indeed, the sooner you take his brother away, the better for him. Oh, yes, he ate his breakfast

—a good breakfast, too. If you're going to be up as soon as that, I'll wait. Oh, by the way, doctor, this man Friskens wants to know if you can use him. You'll have to have help to get Sevier out to the asylum. He's quiet here in the house, but there's a look about him that I don't like. Friskens thinks he tried to get a gun awhile ago, and he pretended that he wanted to shave himself for the sake of getting his hands on a razor. Yes. Well, I'll tell Friskens you'll take him then—the Seviars will pay."

Robert rose and bathed his face. They stood over him while he brushed the thick curling locks into shape.

"Why did you say that I pretended I wanted to shave?" he inquired furiously. "Would n't any gentleman want to shave for his morning toilet?"

The sound of wheels on the gravel before the door came up to them while the room was still being ransacked, and Robert thought desperately of every means by which he could secure the protection of his precious notes and manuscripts. It was a closed carriage from which Doctor Watkins and his partner, little Doctor Gibson, descended, and evidently intended to take the patient to the sanatorium in.

Robert looked about him in agony as the time for departure approached. There in a corner for Rindy to sweep out was a bunch of manuscripts which recorded all of his experiments made up in the mountains—his final tests. The propeller had been set on the floor of his closet among some wornout foot-gear. A vial of the pure fluid lay in the midst of the disordered papers, the cork loose, and ready for any tilt to send it spilling on the floor. They were looking for his hat, and since he had worn none home from the meeting last night, and mutely refused to inform them where his others were, the search was somewhat delayed.

A vehicle came up to the side door. It was the express wagon ordered by Tate after his final talk with Watkins. In a sort of waking nightmare the young Professor saw his trunk and satchels go down the back stairs on the shoulders of a big dinky.

The telephone rang. Rindy answered it.

"Naw 'm. Miss Laury she's on de baid; she cain't come to speak to you. Yassum, dis is Rindy. Yassum. Marse Robert's plumb crazy, Miss Alice—I reckon dat's shore true. Naw 'm, you mistaken. 'Tain't no new thing. He used to jump round in his room, a traipsin' de blankets after him, and skeer me 'most out o' my senses. Yistedday he clum' up on de sideboa'd and stuck his toes in de dessert. He suttinly done so. You wants to say good-by to him? I don't reckon dey'll let him come to you-all's house. Spec' you better not come yere, honey. Marse William he's takin' on pow'ful. Whut's dat! Oh, de ker-ridge done come for him. Yassum, and de doctors bofe in it. Yo'

blue silk—wid de poonchy sleeves? Oh-oh-oh—ow! Yassum. I shore will dat! *Yassum!*”

Rindy dropped the receiver with a clatter, and, two at a jump, ran up the stairs and burst into the room where the two attendants were searching for head-wear. Grinning broadly, she announced:

“Miss Alice Kutcheval comin’ over to say good-by to Marse Robert—you-all got to wait.”

“It’s out of the question—it would be unsafe,” snapped Dabney Tate. “I’ll go down and speak to Doctor Watkins. I know he won’t allow it.”

“You stand right whar you’ at,” ordered Rindy, squaring herself in the doorway, arms akimbo. “Miss Alice done promise’ me her las’ summer’s blue silk—and hit as good as de day hit ’uz finished—she say I shall have it ef I hold him ’till she run across de campus, and dat’s what’s goin’ to be did.”

“God bless her—oh, God bless her!” cried Robert Sevier, sinking into a chair.

“Now, see here, my girl,” said Dabney sharply, trying to push past the grinning Rindy. “Professor Sevier is n’t safe for a lady to see.”

“Naw, he ain’t,” mocked the negress. “He’s a heap too good-lookin’, ’cordin’ to yo’ way o’ thinkin’.”

Dabney Tate’s face reddened angrily, and he made as if to speak, but seemed to think better of it.

“Are you about ready for us, Mr. Tate?” came the pompous voice of Doctor Watkins. “Shall we make the examination up there or will you bring him down to the parlor?”

“Step in de poller, please, suh,” directed Rindy, before Tate or Friskens could make any reply. “One o’ Marse Robert’s partic’lar frien’s is a-comin’ over to say good-by to him. He’ll be down in de poller when he gits dar, and den you’ll see him.”

The slightly bewildered physician had moved into the room and seated himself before he became aware that he was put off. Then he fairly bounced into the hall and called up:

“This is unreasonable. You folks had plenty of notice. Bring the patient down at once—I can’t wait.”

“All right,” called Tate from above-stairs. “Come on, Friskens—we can go past Foster’s and buy him a hat. Will you come quietly, Professor Sevier?” And Tate signed to Friskens to close in on the other side.

Absurd and monstrous—monstrous and absurd! Yet it looked as though, what with the victim’s mistaken earlier policy of reticence, the stupid incompetence of those nearest him, and Dabney Tate’s energy and ability, the young Professor would be railroaded into a

sanatorium that was simply a private asylum for the insane, before the sun set.

As they moved to go, Rindy, muttering, ran out ahead of them, down the stairs, and out the front door. Robert unobtrusively closed his eyes and prayed.

And the next moment two pairs of running feet sounded on the porch, and they heard Alice Kercheval's voice cry out as she came through the hall.

IX.

"OH, Doctor Watkins, is that you?" Alice exclaimed. "You're going to let me see Professor Robert Sevier—I know you are."

She was hastening to the stairway even as she spoke. They heard Dr. Watkins's important bass rumble, apparently in remonstrance. Then Alice's "But I must see him—I will see him!" And her light step mounted the stair.

"Keep hold of him, Friskens," ordered Tate sullenly. Alice Kercheval should see what kind of person her very particular friend was. If outside irritation could drive Robert Sevier into misbehavior, into ridiculous, unseemly, or violent resistance, Dabney appeared to have decided that it should not be lacking. "Don't you let loose of him a minute while that lady's in the room," he adjured.

"You'd better ketch a-holt of him on the other side," Friskens agreed cheerfully. "They're mighty tricky sometimes. It'll be safer for the both of us to hold him when there's a lady round that might be screaming or fainting or such."

Robert saw the uselessness of a struggle. He stood quietly between his captors, and ignored them as much as possible.

The girl came into the room with a rush. Her face was plainly flushed with weeping, and her gray eyes were still brilliant with unshed tears. To neither of her lovers had she ever seemed more lovely, more womanly and adorable, than at that moment. Ignoring the others as Robert had done, she advanced to within a foot of the suspected maniac and stared steadily into his face.

"Well," she began gently, "what have you been forgetting or leaving out now, that people call you crazy?"

There was even a little ghost of laughter about her lips as she spoke, and the fearful tension of the moment relaxed, for Robert at least.

"Miss Alice," he said, with a flickering up of hope, "you could help me—if you would. Get these folks to delay this fool examination, and let me make a demonstration of my new discovery—it was in working over it that I made them think I was crazy."

Carried away by his interest, forgetful of where he stood, Robert

was turning toward his desk when Friskens caught his arm and dragged him back.

"None o' that!" growled the keeper. "You stand still and answer when you're spoke to; but you can't go opening drawers and getting things out of 'em—ain't that so, Mr. Tate?"

The girl's amazed, horrified eyes followed the speaker's and rested upon the countenance of Dabney Tate when he was thus interrogated; and as he nodded affirmatively, the indignant crimson rushed over her face, and she drew up her tall young figure to its utmost height.

Robert, worn and exhausted by much harrying and long nervous strain, his powers of resistance at their lowest ebb, pulled away from their detaining hands and threw himself into his chair, muttering:

"I guess it's no use to try. Any innocent movement on my part is taken as a manifestation of insanity now." And his head went forward on the arm he flung out across the stand.

But Alice Kercheval came fresh to this battle. She was of a different nature from the young Professor; she had a pretty temper of her own, and this situation called loudly to it.

"You idiots! You brutes!" cried the girl, apportioning her remarks appropriately between Tate and the fireman.

She stood a moment looking down at the bowed head of the man she loved. His own people had run away, lest they might be pained. There was no one else to help him. If she did not, he was worse than dead for lack of it. With a little sobbing breath she sank upon her knees beside his chair, laid a hand over his that trembled on the arm of that chair, and said softly:

"Now, Robert, I'm here to do what you want done. Tell me what it is. You can trust me, can't you?"

"Trust you?" Robert forgot to be bashful; he forgot that she was a pretty girl, the girl he loved, the girl of whom he had been so dreadfully afraid. "Trust you!" he echoed. "Of course I can trust you. The question is, will you trust me? I am afraid to repeat—with Doctor Watkins and his partner in the house—that I have invented a fluid which causes living bodies to float in the air like balloons. Watkins will take it—it seems to be agreed among them all to accept it, without allowing me any chance to prove my statement—as an evidence of lunacy and nothing else."

"Oh, I won't—I won't!" cried Alice, grasping his arm and shaking him a little in the excess of her earnestness. "I saw you in the tabernacle. You did n't climb up the wall—you rose. Oh—and they'll shut you in an asylum, where all your brilliant work will be lost! Quick—tell me what to do. Whom shall I call?"

"Your father—get Rindy to go over and bring Doctor Kercheval.

He's a sensible man—he'll be neither frightened nor incredulous, once I can have a chance to explain to him."

"Oh, I will. We're on the right track now," cried the girl, with shining eyes. "I saw you in the tabernacle. You did rise."

"Yassum—and he done riz here one mornin', widout stopping to dress hisself, an' trailed Miss Laury's bedclothes all over de place, and skeer me out o' a year's growth," chimed in Rindy, from the doorway. "But ef you feel lak yo' say 'bout de blue silk, I ain't goin' to stand in yo' way, nor yit in his. I'll run over for Marse Kutcheval—yassum."

Dabney Tate and his assistant, the one half sullen, the other merely dubious, had perforce drawn back a little.

"Robert," said Alice, as the negress hurried down the steps, "you need a friend—you must have some one—and I'm going to be that friend. I understand that you have been afraid of me for months because——" she hesitated, then took it with a rush, as a gallant hunter might an ugly leap—"I betrayed my deep attachment for you at the lawn fête this spring. Oh, Robert, dear Robert, you need n't be afraid of me! I can be your friend always—and nothing more. I understand that your feeling for me is only friendship—but it would break my heart to see you carried away to an asylum."

Before Robert could utter the eager disclaimer that trembled on his lips, "Well," cut in Tate, with ill-restrained fury, from where he stood at a window, drumming upon the pane, "it appears to me that everybody round here is as crazy as Bob Sevier. I must commend your courage, Miss Alice. Have you heard the story of how he slung Miss Sally Sorsby's little dog Hyacinth out of the up-stairs window and killed it?"

Alice turned to Robert Sevier for confirmation or denial of this statement. He merely looked distressed and discountenanced.

"Has Mr. Tate any right to direct your course in any way, Miss Alice?" he asked finally.

"He has not," she answered brusquely.

For a moment the young Professor of Chemistry hesitated, desperately uncomfortable; then he broke out:

"I had taken a dose of the fluid, and got to floating round in the air, Alice, and I was up above you that night at the lawn fête. I heard what you and Dabney said while he lied to you and told you I was down with Miss Sally listening to the music."

For a moment there was silence in the room. Then Friskens, bulwarked by invincible ignorance, yawned. The maunderings of a lunatic were rather boring in his estimation. Alice, who believed implicitly what Robert said, was going over that evening in deep embarrassment, and thankfully remembering that she had not let Tate kiss her. That young gentleman saw that Robert Sevier must have been

within earshot of his statements, whether floating in the air or otherwise.

"What the devil is all this nonsense?" he finally demanded, listening to the evil counsels of his rage, and letting go all manners and appearances. "I'm going to call Professor William Sevier and have it stopped."

But he had no longer Robert Sevier to deal with.

"I wish you would!" flashed Alice. "He'll get here about the same time papa does. Why is n't he here now? He ought to be thoroughly ashamed of himself—and Mrs. Sevier, too; letting all sorts of ignorant, irresponsible persons in here to browbeat and insult Professor Robert. I'd like to see him and speak my mind to him. *He's* the one that's acting crazy!"

Tate fell back before this plucky onslaught, and Friskens looked a bit cheap and bewildered. But now, "Mr. Tate," boomed the voice of Doctor Watkins from the hall below, "President Kercheval is here, and Professor William Sevier has come down-stairs to receive him. I desire to know at once, shall Doctor Gibson and I come up and make that examination now?"

"Yes!" called Alice. "Bring papa and Professor William Sevier right up with you."

"Alice, are you going to stand by me?" demanded Robert in a low tone. "It may be worse than you think—more difficult. I've had enough of it to know."

The others were looking toward the open door, where their visitors would appear. He felt the brush of velvet lips across his cheek.

"You poor boy—yes," she breathed in his ear. "Don't be frightened that I'll expect more of you than your honest friendship; but I'll stand by you—forever."

With assurance so sweet, so humble, what could an ardent lover like Robert Sevier do but meet the incoming deputation with the surprising accost, "Wait a minute. Before this investigation goes any further, I want to say to President Kercheval that I have loved his daughter for two years. During those two years I have been working on my discovery, and if it issues hopefully from this mix-up, and I am found to be not only a sane man but a successful one, I shall ask him for her."

The newcomers had ranged themselves round the room. Dr. Kercheval looked with some surprise at the reputed madman, glanced keenly at those who had him in charge, and inclined his head in courteous, if non-committal, response to this speech.

William turned aside in humiliation, and shaded his face with a trembling hand.

But Dabney Tate folded his arms and buried his chin in his necktie,

that he might regard the young Professor through lowered eyebrows, muttering:

"Crazy—crazy—crazy as a loon!"

Alice turned on him sharply.

"So you think he's crazy because he wants to marry me, do you? Well, I'd marry him to-morrow, if papa says yes," she flung at him, looking for all the world like an indignant small boy who cries to a dishonorable opponent, "Take that!"

Friskens nudged the gloomy Tate and whispered in a perfectly audible tone:

"I say—there's a pair of 'em. Both of 'em crazy as they get."

Dr. Kercheval looked at his spirited daughter, at young Professor Sevier, then at the others, and seemed at least very doubtful. And he forbore to check the girl.

"We can't have this sort of thing," fumed Doctor Watkins. And little Gibson confirmed, "We certainly cannot."

"We're here to make an inquiry into this man's sanity," proceeded Watson. "I want to see if he is capable of—I want to ask him a certain set of questions, and deduce a certain thing from his answers to those questions, and these irrelevant matters put me all out."

Alice flew to the old gentleman's side with her most blandishing smile. Years ago, when he was a hard-working general practitioner, he had taken her through measles and whooping-cough, and she understood just the best method of getting around him.

"No, they don't," she declared sweetly. "Nothing ever puts me out. You want Professor Robert to talk a good deal, so that you can see whether he's crazy or not. If he has made a great discovery, you know, Doctor Watkins, you would n't want him to be taken out to an asylum for it—they'd say you ought not to have committed him under those circumstances."

Little Gibson started nervously.

"That's so—that's so," agreed Watkins, staring owlishly at the sweet young face through his round spectacles. "Well, since you seem to be managing this matter, ask the young man what he wants next."

"I'll have you get me the hypodermic syringe out of the desk there—the little left-hand drawer, dear—and pick up that bottle of stuff in the corner that's in danger of being spilled. It's very precious. It is the only fluid of its sort in this round world. A dose of it will make a two-hundred-pound man float around the ceiling of this room like a feather."

Dr. Kercheval looked anxious. Friskens snickered. Dabney Tate joined him. Here seemed something hopeful to his purpose. The two doctors exchanged a significant glance.

"No, no," objected Watkins. "As I understand it, the hypodermic

use of drugs is what has brought Professor Sevier to this condition. I cannot be party to any such action."

"Aw, let him have his dose," put in Friskens. "What's the difference? He'll feel better, and come along peaceable. He's bughouse all right, anyhow; and when they get that way they have to have a dose to steady 'em."

With sparkling eyes, Alice ran to do her lover's bidding. As she put vial and syringe into the young man's hand, "You can't take a dose of that infernal stuff that has led to your ruin here in my presence!" thundered Professor William unexpectedly.

"If I had a rabbit—or a dog," sighed Robert, instantly dejected at this check.

"You can try it on me," said the young girl bravely, though her cheek paled a little. She looked appealingly to her father. The old gentleman was game and uttered no demur.

But the ordinarily peaceable William, who seemed to have reached a stage of irritation which rendered him absolutely unmanageable, came charging into the situation again, with "You shall torture no more animals—nor shall you risk the life or reason of Miss Alice."

In his extremity, the good practical sense which always lay fast asleep under Robert Sevier's absent-minded dreaminess came to his rescue. His eye fell upon Friskens. He remembered what Tate had said about the Seviere paying for this man's services.

"Alice," he suggested hopefully, "you go down and ask my sister-in-law to give you ten dollars. These men have taken all my money. They packed it in the trunk—it has already gone; but she'll have that much by her—Laura always has."

Alice was out of the room instantly. Laura herself answered the call with two five-dollar bills in her hand.

"Now, then, Friskens, this stuff won't hurt you a bit, except to make you float in the air. There are positively no evil after-effects, and I've got an antidote that will bring you down whenever you say you want to come. Here's the money—ten real dollars, out of a perfectly sane woman's pocketbook—to pay you for being experimented upon. Is it a go?"

Friskens, who had been fretting himself and mumbling, "Nobody ought ever to trust 'em with good money, or they're liable to throw it out o' the winder," promptly agreed to the arrangement.

"I'm going to throw this money away—on you," Robert observed gaily, as he pushed up the sleeves on the big, powerful fore-arms.

Friskens grinned. He winked as he slowly dipped his finger into the fluid and tasted it to see whether it was any drug with which he was familiar. Its flavor suggested rain water, and he decided he would

earn his ten dollars easily. A lunatic with a mouth full of polysyllables was no more formidable to him than any other variety.

With a quick, skilful touch Robert injected the fluid twice, watching carefully each time that the entire dose passed beneath the skin. As he cleansed and unscrewed the little instrument and put it away, there was an oppressive silence in the big, old-fashioned room, during which Bobby crept to the door sniffing, and Rindy followed him.

The men had drawn somewhat together. Laura clung to Alice, as to one feminine and therefore presumably comprehensible, amid this bewildering masculine farrago. In the sharp suspense of that moment, every head was craned forward, and every face showed unconsciously the mere naif, instant emotion. Dr. Gibson had opened his mouth to speak just as the injection was given. He stood staring and forgot to shut it. Everybody's breathing became suddenly audible.

But Friskens maintained an air of tolerant and amused superiority. There was a grin on his fat face; and as Robert bent to put away the hypodermic, the keeper winked confidentially to the others, over the young scientist's head, and reached for the coat which had been taken off for the hypodermic injections.

Suddenly the big man began to sway on his feet, and a rush of blood made his face deep crimson.

"I—I can't stay down!" he choked, and shot upward so abruptly that the young Professor had just time to catch him by the waistband of his trousers and save his head from sharp contact with the ceiling. William collapsed into a chair. Dr. Gibson's fallen jaw rose slowly till his teeth came together with a click. Alice flashed a mute look about the circle of faces.

"A-a-ah!" ejaculated Doctor Kercheval keenly.

"Good Lawd!" moaned Rindy from the doorway. "Dat's jes' de way Marse Robert done riz!"

"No!" shrilled Bobby. "Uncle Robert went up feet first. His head was all hanging down!"

Friskens was getting his breath in great snorting gasps, while his arms and legs wagged like those of a man swimming.

"You'll have to quit that," said young Sevier impatiently. "If you kick around that way your heels will fly up, and I can't keep them from it. Hold yourself steady."

"I can't—stay down," asserted Friskens monotonously.

"If everybody is satisfied," said Robert, looking about him, "I'll give this man a dose of the antidote, and he can get his feet on the floor."

"But wha—what the devil's the reason I can't—stay down?" boomed Friskens, like the undertone of the sea on a stormy day.

Robert undertook no explanation to the elevated one, but said again to the others:

"Well, are you satisfied? Anybody got any questions to ask before I administer the antidote?"

Dead silence for a moment. Then, "I've—I've heard of remarkable cases of levitation at—at—" began Dr. Watkins doubtfully, feeling it incumbent upon him to speak.

"At spiritual seances," supplied Gibson respectfully.

"Seances!" echoed President Kercheval. "Did n't you see Professor Sevier inject the fluid into the man's arms? And did n't you see the man rise as Sevier said he would? And don't you see him remain in air, unable to get his feet to the floor? We are beholding the first results of a very great discovery. Gentlemen, we should take off our hats to this young man. I, for one, am thoroughly convinced, and profoundly grateful that the shame of persecuting a successful scientist has not come upon Unaka College."

"Unless—unless Bob Sevier's holding the man up there; he's got his hand on him," began Tate, who had not succeeded as an insurance agent for nothing. "Friskens, is he holding you up, or what is it makes you behave so peculiarly?"

Friskens rolled his eyes about him and paddled feebly with his hands and feet. In the effort he pulled loose from Robert's detaining fingers and rose instantly to the ceiling, where he went slowly bumping about, erratically directed by a random breeze from the window.

"I can't—stay down," came the apparently automatic but fairly appropriate reply to Tate's question.

Robert Sevier, who had prepared a dose of antidote, laid hold of the voyager's foot, deftly pushed up that trousers leg, and with a slight prick above the ankle brought the cowed and dumfounded man safely to earth.

"Then—then you think he's not—you think he's entirely—that is, you believe I'm not needed here?" inquired Doctor Watkins incredulously.

"You—ah—really deem the young man sane?" little Gibson chimed in after him.

"Are n't—are n't you going to have Watkins take him out to Elm View—for a while, at least?" stammered the pertinacious Tate, but on a falling note. "Don't you think—is n't he a lunatic at all?" This was a man to lead a forlorn hope.

"If he is, his lunacy's contagious. I've got it, right now, and the rest of the world will soon have it as bad!" cried the good old President. "Come up here and apologize, Dabney, for making such a nuisance of yourself to one of the greatest young scientists of his day. I'll set you a good example. Robert, here's my hand. Pardon me for not disbelieving appearances, and looking closer into this matter—for not acting as Alice did. At least, we can both be proud of her.

William, if I were your brother, I'd never forgive you for your part in this ridiculous business. Laura—well, she gave ten dollars to bring the miracle about—she's bought her indulgence."

Under the old man's rain of genial common-sense, matters began to straighten themselves out in every-day fashion. William, still bewildered and somewhat at a loss as to whom he should reprove, yet came up and made his *amende* like a man. Alice forbore to triumph. She stood beside her lover and watched with shining eyes as even Dr. Watkins and his partner showed a marked disposition to remember that they were fellow scientists. And Tate—for even an insurance man must know when to give in—offered a regretful hand, deploring the complications which had arisen from his over-zeal in friendship's cause and his ignorance of what he facetiously termed "high science."

Friskens was stepping high, and regarding his feet as though they belonged to somebody else.

"That'd be handy stuff to have when we wanted to cross a river and did n't have a boat," he suggested thoughtfully, as he took his hat to go. "Say, mister, if you get to giving shows with it and need a handy man to help on the stage, I'll be there—see!"

X.

It was wonderful to find how many people had known all the time that young Professor Sevier was as sane as you or I—just a genius, and his people were so commonplace that they did n't understand him. Oh, yes, and that Sorsby girl was crazy about him, and when he showed so plainly that he was in love with Alice Kercheval she just put her father up to making most of the trouble. But really what Professor Sorsby did was n't a circumstance to Dabney Tate's goings on! Yes. They do say that he and Sally Sorsby have fixed up a match—trying to cover their feelings at getting left so. Oh, the story was a real godsend to the gossips of the little town.

And Robert worked away happily, and demonstrated his results to a chosen few. Dabney Tate made an effort in the course of a week or two to patch up his somewhat damaged standing in the Sevier household, and induce the successful investigator to put him in charge of the commercial exploitation of his discovery. It was at that time that President Kercheval's eldest son, Alice's favorite brother, came down from New York and insisted upon taking all of that business into his own hands. Scott Kercheval was a pushing metropolitan business man, who understood the value of advertising, and he maintained that there was a fortune for all concerned in the Sevier-Kercheval discovery.

"We want to keep it very quiet now. When we're ready I'll let the big newspapers at you, and we'll get the most sensational free advertising that's to be had. Then I'll offer shares in the company,

and in less than six months we'll have Rockefeller doing chores for us and shaking down our furnace."

So said Scott Kercheval, middle-aged, prosperous, confident in his own powers. He might as well have talked turnip culture to an astronomer. Robert Sevier was not only a scientist, he was a man in love and about to be happily married. This in no way troubled his prospective brother-in-law, and the preparations for the wedding and the preparations for the launching of the great company went cheerily on side by side.

One radiant June morning Robert had been to the county clerk's office for that necessary document known as a marriage license. How he ever summoned sufficient courage and confidence to ask for it he never knew. Now that it was in his pocket, it made a warm spot over his heart, and he was reminded of radium, which, wrapped in a cloth and carried in a similar fashion, may even blister the body.

The sight of Dabney Tate and Sally Sorsby chatting together on a corner affected him agreeably. He hoped they loved each other. He wanted everybody to love and be happy. He stopped and beamed upon them as he took off his hat and gave them good morning.

"Good morning," returned the young lady, with deceitful suavity. "How is the rising young man of Unaka College this morning? Be careful you don't rise forever and never come down, as my poor Hyacinth did."

A cloud dimmed the attractive brightness of young Professor Sevier's countenance.

"Miss Sally," he replied seriously, "I felt awfully bad about Hyacinth right at the time, and I've been feeling worse and worse ever since. I mean to get you another pet, if you'll accept that partial reparation from me."

Poor Sally! She never could look at Robert Sevier, at his inches and his innocent eyes, at the breadth of his shoulders and the way his thick hair curled about temple and ear, without a twinge of misery. Now she turned to Tate with a little shrug of her shoulders and remarked indifferently:

"Oh, I ought to be willing to make a small sacrifice in the cause of science, I reckon. I gave up Hyacinth—but I don't want any other dog. Science has a way of running over people's rights that I suppose is perfectly natural to big things; but Hyacinth can never be replaced."

"Miss Sally," repeated Robert in an agony of self-abasement, "I don't make science an excuse. It was I who lost your pet, and I ought to at least try to make it up to you. I always keep my promises——"

"Well, I'm shore glad to hear that!" sounded a deep voice behind him, and the three people turned and stared.

"Honey, I've been a-lookin' everywhere for you!"

It was the widow Gannon! Robert had never seen her before in town trim, and for a moment he scarcely recognized her.

In mad defiance of the hot June day, a small red cloth jacket, dragged on over her purple calico frock, clad the upper part of her lean, muscular frame, the tight sleeves holding her big, bony arms almost akimbo. A tiny flower toque composed almost entirely of forget-me-nots framed the weather-bleached anxiety of her countenance.

Robert cast a glance of terror about him. Up the street, there, was home and safety—Alice waited for him, sitting on the porch, putting the last stitches in the long white seam.

Then Sally Sorsby snickered.

"Wait a minute," she said in a perfectly audible undertone, catching Dabney Tate by the arm. "Stay here with me—I want to hang around and see what this means."

Juletta Gannon glared at the bold town girl; and, to do Sally justice, she was well glared at in return. While these amenities were in progress Robert Sevier sought to execute a withdrawal movement. But plainly it was not necessary for the widow to look at him in order to see him. Now she wheeled upon him.

"Hold on—ain't you glad to see me, honey?" she inquired, with rising menace in her tone.

"I—why, certainly. But I just have to meet a man up the street here, and I thought——" began Robert desperately.

Dabney Tate and Miss Sorsby made no pretense of not listening. One or two passers-by checked, turned, and stood for a moment, wondering what the difficulty was. Suddenly the swinging green doors of a place of cheer near at hand flew open, and out filed the five Black-shears. They slouched forward in a careless-looking group and greeted the Professor each with an indifferent nod; yet one who supposed they were present without a purpose, and that they were not difficult men to deal with, would have been sadly mistaken.

"I brung that thar ring down," Juletta explained in a high-keyed, unnatural voice, "thinkin' you might like to git it made bigger for me. I cain't wear it on ary finger but the little 'un, and that ain't the right engagement finger, is it?"

She smiled upon the shrinking Professor with a sort of savage fondness, such as one may imagine a cannibal indulging toward a prospective dinner. He stretched out his hand for the jewel with a relieved countenance.

"Oh—the ring," he said promptly. "I'm glad you brought it. I'm ready to pay you the money now—you understood, of course, I meant to leave it with you as a pledge?"

"Oh, Lord, yes, we all understood that—did n't we, Jeff?" she returned easily.

The tall mountaineer nodded solemnly.

"As a pledge," he repeated. "That's what a feller means when he gives an engagement ring, and Juletta's come to redeem the pledge an' git wedded right now."

"But Professor Sevier is going to be married to——"

It was Sally Sorsby's voice which broke in, shrill and insistent, drawing the attention of everybody for a block.

"You're mighty right, he's goin' to git married!" declared Taylor Gannon's relict. "The feller that gives me his faith is apt to dance up when the time comes."

"See here," began Robert in exasperation, "this is ridiculous; let's go somewhere that we can talk without having the whole town for listeners, and I'll explain matters. We're blocking the sidewalk."

"Not on your life!" said the widow, bringing out a bit of slang acquired from her summer boarders. "I don't sneak around to hide my actions. I want your fine town friends to hear. I've come to bid them to the weddin'!"

"Wedding!" repeated Robert, staring at her.

"Yes, weddin'," repeated the widow doggedly. "I ain't the kind of woman to have my feelin's all trompled up and nothin' said. When a man passes his vows and makes his proposal to Juletta Gannon there's goin' to be somethin' did. It's mighty like that I looked prettier to you by moonlight—most women of my age does—but you're pledged an' bound, an' I'm the kind of a woman that keeps a man true."

Shifting sand seemed to gather and flow beneath the feet of the unfortunate Professor. It needed no dose of the magic fluid to give him the sensation of being in deep water. He looked into Dabney Tate's grinning face, at the cool, sneering smile on Sally Sorsby's blond countenance, and despaired of any help. Jeff had lined up his men on the curbstone like a sheriff's posse; there was nothing for it but to try conciliation.

"Mrs. Gannon," he said very earnestly, "I don't know how you got the idea that I ever said anything to you about love or marriage. I'm quite sure I never intended to. In point of fact, I am going to be married very shortly to the daughter of our college president."

"You—you give me a ring," choked the mountain woman. "Ef I git my hands on that other gal—she'll wish't I had n't!" And she extended an awkward member, upon one of whose fingers gleamed Robert Sevier's unlucky birthday present.

"I know that ring," exclaimed Sally Sorsby vivaciously. "I helped Laura Sevier choose it. She gave it to her brother-in-law on his last birthday."

The girl felt that her wrongs, and the woes of Hyacinth, were about to be avenged.

"Oh, he won't deny the ring," said the widow Gannon, with emphasis. "Mebbe he wants to deny now that he give it to me; but he did—he put his arm around my waist and squeezed me awful tight, and said a whole lot of pretty words and big dictionary talk, and give me the ring!"

Robert's sensitive face crimsoned. "I did give you the ring," he acknowledged honestly; "but it was to pay for live stock that I feared I had destroyed with my experiments. If I said anything to you about love and marriage, I must have been dreaming."

"No, you was n't," countered the widow shortly. "When men dreams they don't do nothin' but snore. One of 'em has to be pretty wide awake to git his arm around *my* waist!"

"Ain't they a justice of the peace about here somewheres?" inquired Jeff's drawling tones suddenly.

"Just round the corner—I'll go with you," Dabney Tate eagerly assured him. "I'll go with you—I know the chap."

"And you'll take me along, won't you?" inquired Sally Sorsby.

"I got to stop and git me a—git me something at the store," explained the widow blushing.

And before he knew it Robert Sevier was hustled, in the middle of the crowd, into a department store, where the five lank, fierce mountain men tramped like Indians, with the still, wary tread of the hunter, among piles of calicoes and stands of embroidered collars, while Dabney Tate and Sally Sorsby looked enjoyingly on. It created a small sensation among the clerks.

"You set right here, Robert, honey," the widow said triumphantly, as they reached the waiting-room on an upper balcony. "I've got to go in this yere little pen an' try 'em on. I wish't the town gal'd come with me."

Sally Sorsby was keen to go, thinking that she would here get wholesale a budget which it would be a delight to retail. Jeff and the other brothers, with Dabney Tate, lounged about the supposed bridegroom, the Blackshears always preserving that air of solemnity which the mountaineer feels belongs with town doings.

Suddenly there was a flare of music in the street outside. The pickaninny band of a travelling minstrel show was parading the streets to drum up interest in the evening's performance. The committee from the Far Cove neighborhood made for the windows as one man. Professor Sevier gave a single glance at the momentarily absorbed Dabney Tate, then turned and fled toward the nearest exit.

Alice Kercheval had finished her sewing and let it drop in her lap. Her soft eyes were wells of happy dreams. Suddenly up the walk came the central figure of all those girlish visions, a flushed, breathless,

excited lover, who caught her hand and began speaking before she had fully realized that he was with her:

"Dearest, we're to be married to-morrow night, anyhow. There's an awful widow from up in the mountains down-town, who thinks she has some sort of a claim on me. You'll understand in a minute that she has n't. But she could make it dreadfully unpleasant for both of us. I came to beg you to fly with me."

"Really to fly?" asked the bride, with sparkling eyes. "I've wanted to so bad, and you never would try it on me. Oh, Robert, I feel as if I could almost go up without a dose of It!"

"Get your hat, dear. The license is in my pocket. We'll be married at Arlington. I'll telephone from there to our people here, and have the trunks and things forwarded, and we'll go right on to Niagara just the same. Arlington's only nine miles—it is n't any distance at all for the fluid to carry as we have it now; and my new propeller's perfect, and powerful."

"Oh, Robert—look!" cried the girl.

A car had stopped a half-block from the cottage. A large woman in a tight red jacket and a small blue flower toque, breathing very hard, rushed up the street, followed by five lean and wiry mountaineers in single file. Sally Sorsby and Dabney Tate brought up the rear. As the horrified eyes of the two young people on the porch took in this scene, Professor Sorsby and President Kercheval sauntered over from one of the buildings and came almost abreast of the rabble, where Scott Kercheval and Professor William Sevier joined them.

Alice had caught up and tied on her wide garden hat. Robert opened a case which stood on the porch—he had intended to call for it on his way past—and took out one of the newest make of his propellers. He slipped his right arm and Alice's left through the straps, since they would have to use one machine, and, drawing out his hypodermic from his case, gave each a lightning dose from it.

The instrument was put back into his pocket, his arm dropped naturally around the slim waist of the girl he loved. They turned and began moving swiftly away across the grass, looking back over their shoulders at the panting pursuers.

"Is that her?" screamed the widow breathlessly.

"Yes!" gasped Sally Sorsby.

The brisk breeze was drifting the levitated pair directly toward a group of oak trees. Robert had no wish to display the workings of his discovery before this audience, but necessity made him turn the propeller in such a way that they rose lightly against the green ends of the tree branches and passed quietly over.

As the pair were outlined for a moment upon the clear blue of the morning sky, the widow's voice ascended in an impotent wail.

"Stop 'em!" she pleaded. "That thar man belongs to me—and they say the sky's plumb full o' preachers. Mebbe he'll wed the other girl befo' ever he 'lights."

"Rock 'em down!" howled Jate, bending to search for a stone.

But to Jeff the hip-pocket argument appealed. He had drawn his gun and taken fair aim when a newly arrived policeman sprang upon him, knocking up the wrist with a ready baton, half breaking it with the blow, and shouting:

"Hey! You're under arrest for shootin' with intent to kill."

"Good Gawd," growled the mountain man as he rubbed his arm and ruefully observed the officer confiscating his weapon, which had exploded harmlessly, "I don't see how town folks lives, with these here little do-funny policemen poppin' up ever' minute to make an' to muddle, an' stop 'em from any little innocent thing they want to do!"

"Why, it's Alice and Robert Sevier!" exclaimed Dr. Kercheval about this time. "That foolish bashfulness of Robert's has got the better of him, and he's running away from a big church wedding. The reckless girl persuaded him to give her a dose of the fluid. They are——"

He broke off, waved his arm at the disappearing pair, and called:

"Alice—Alice! Robert!"

"Running away! They're flying," Scott spoke low in his ear. "Let 'em alone, father. If this suits them, it certainly pleases the business office. I could n't get Bob worked up to give a public exhibition." He chuckled buoyantly. "I've been at him for a week. But this is better—it's just what I want. The newspapers can get plenty out of it."

Again he laughed, and smote his thigh.

"Oh, mamma! think of the headlines! 'Rise Above Your Troubles.' 'Every Man His Own Balloon.' 'Icarus Outdone.' Bob and Allie will get it about like this: 'Scientist Snaked Skyward. Wafted to Their Wedding.' But it's just what we want to get the publicity department of the Levitation Company off on the right foot."

Up in the sky Alice's white dress faded like a gull's wing. Down on the ground the widow Gannon went into something as near hysterics as the strong-nerved mountain woman could compass.

And to-morrow, or next day—or it may be next week—you are liable to get a long blue envelope which will offer you preferred stock in the Sevier-Kercheval Levitation Company, Limited. Don't fail to buy, for you have inside knowledge of how good a thing it is.



POE

By George L. Knapp

GENERALLY speaking, the history of American literature has been singularly peaceful. But Poe, and in a later day Whitman, have been storm centres which have almost made us forget the summer calm of our literary landscape. It is not so much that the facts of Poe's career are in dispute; though the record leaves something to be desired in the way of authenticity. It is rather that those facts are viewed through the spectacles of prejudice; spectacles now rosy with affection, now green with envy, but never by any chance colorless. One biographer dwells on the testimony of Willis, that Poe was the gentlest gentleman who ever did hack work in a newspaper office; and treats us to long descriptions—usually written by women—of the poet's remarkable beauty, his charm of manner, his old-world courtesy. Another lingers with loving malice over the fact that other men paid Poe's tailor bills, that he reprinted his old articles and poems as new ones, and that he had been known to sleep off his potations on the sawdust-covered floor of a low-class bar-room. One tells us at length of Poe's undeniable love for his wife; and another of his equally undeniable efforts to marry some wealthy woman—any one would do—during the days of his widowerhood. That Poe was a great and a morbid genius the world is fully agreed; and it is agreed on very little else concerning him.

The greater part of Poe's life history is an oft-told tale, but one that seems to gather fresh interest with each retelling. That he was born in Boston, in 1809, the son of a worthy actress mother and a worthless, well-born father; and that a little more than forty years later he was picked up unconscious in a Baltimore slum and taken to a hospital to die, are items in the mental furniture of millions. The death of his mother before his third birthday; his adoption by John Allan, a shrewd Scotch merchant settled in Richmond, Virginia; his admission to and expulsion from West Point, are likewise common property. It is not so well known that prior to his West Point experience he served two years in the regular army under an assumed name, that he won a non-commissioned officer's place by good, steady work,

and that he was reported by his officers to have no bad habits whatever. Every one knows that through a considerable part of his life Poe was a periodical drunkard; not so many are aware that he was a confirmed user of opium. The memory of his stinging criticisms has outlasted the life of the critic—and usually the reputation of the criticised. His stories are still acknowledged masterpieces of plot and workmanship; and the place where "The Raven" is unknown is a place where the English language has not penetrated. Also, Poe was the first American author to gain an international reputation of any value. All these things and many more are known to all who care to interest themselves in Poe. One would think that on so broad a foundation of fact it might be possible to rear a consistent estimate of the strangest character; but such has not been the case.



For the great, obvious fact of Poe's life and work was the morbid, oppressive, horror-shadowed nature of both. His indeed the light that never was on sea nor land; but his as well the phantoms of strangeness and loathing that come up through the ivory gate. It was something deeper than mere melancholy; something immeasurably more genuine than the gloom which Byron coined into trade dollars for literary export. Poe's is a dark, unwholesome habit of mind that shows in all his best work; and is so much a part of him that, with few exceptions, when you miss the morbidity, you miss the genius as well. This is the riddle that must be solved before one can properly appraise the man; and so far, no one has offered a solution that any great number of persons seem inclined to accept.

Yet to my mind, the solution is a curiously simple one. The secret of Poe's jaundiced outlook on life is not his drunkenness nor his opium eating, neither his strange genius nor his undeniable selfishness. It is rather that his temperament and genius and vices combined with the society in which he was placed to shut him off from his fellows, to make him a creature apart. Poe's was the morbidity not of liquor, but of loneliness; not of opium, but of isolation. And that is the worst and most hopeless morbidity of all. Once let the vitalizing stream of human life be walled off, and the clearest waters of thought gather into stagnant and unwholesome pools, where creeping things breed and flourish, and where shapes of fear and foulness haunt the shades. I may add in passing that it seems to make little difference how slight or how massive the barrier may be, if the prisoned individual admits his separation. The abnormality which isolated Poe was trifling compared to that which made Oscar Wilde a prisoner in a haunted cell. Yet "The Fall of the House of Usher" is as great and as morbid as

"The Ballad of Reading Gaol"; "The Conqueror Worm" is as demon-shadowed as "Salome."

We shall never understand Poe's isolation if we fail to take into account the society in which he was placed. And that is not so easy a task as one might think. Much water has gone under the national bridge since the days when Pittsburg was away out West, and the Declaration of Independence was read each Fourth of July under a flag that sheltered the largest body of chattel slaves in the civilized world. Poe died in the year of the gold discovery in California; his best work was done before the telegraph was an accomplished fact, and while the steam railroad was still an experiment. Even in matters of physical environment it requires a distinct effort to put oneself back in those days and remember that one is still in America; and the changes in the intellectual life of the country have been still greater. There is no more amusing contrast in history than that afforded by the difference between the industrial life of America from the War of 1812 to the Civil War, and the intellectual life for the same period. In the business of conquering a continent, building up a splendid though one-sided civilization, working out a code of government, multiplying inventions, and piling up wealth, we were the most active, the most healthy, the most egotistical people on earth. But in matters of literature and science and art, we stood like beggars, hat in hand before Europe or even the casual European traveller; pleading for a crumb of approval; accepting it, when given, with fawning thanks; and resenting the sharp criticism which came more often to our lot, with declamations in which a sack of nouns was drowned, like kittens, in a river of adjectives. Like most beggars, we were thieves as well; reprinting the books of other lands without either thanks or payment. "As a literary people," said Poe, "we are one vast, perambulating humbug." Even the good-humored Lowell felt obliged to tell his countrymen that

You steal Englishmen's books, and think Englishmen's thought;
With their salt on her tale, your wild eagle is caught.

Or not caught. Desire sometimes outran performance.



This was one phase of our mental life in those days; and one can see how it would tend to wall up in brooding loneliness a literary workman like Poe. There were other phases quite as unfavorable. Full justice, I think, has never been done to the art-destroying properties of that sturdy Puritanism which lies at the basis of our national life. We are accustomed to think of Puritanism as belonging only to

New England. In reality, it was almost country wide. Puritanism was but one form of Calvinism; and the only sections of our land which were not Calvinistic at the close of the Revolution were parts of Maryland and the tidewater region of Virginia. For the rest, Puritanism, with its iron strength, its unbreakable stubbornness, its priceless traditions of democracy, and its lamentable contempt for the softer things of life, reigned supreme. The attitude of the old, undiluted creed toward all forms of art is told by Hawthorne in the sketch of the "Custom House" with which he prefaces "The Scarlet Letter." "A writer of story books!" he imagines one of his ancestors saying to another, with reference to their latest descendant. "What kind of a business in life—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in this day and generation—may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!"



Such, or very nearly such, were the traditions of five-sixths of our native stock; and in our case tradition jumped with circumstance to render us a stiff-necked, intensely practical, profoundly inartistic people. What place was there in such a society for Edgar Allan Poe? Where weakness was regarded as a crime, and even harmless self-indulgence as at best a venal sin, what charity or understanding could there be for one whose towering genius was ready to tumble in the mire at the slightest push of temptation, and whose aims at best were reckoned rather piffling work for a full grown man? With a continent in the hair-cloth-sofa stage of culture, from which a favored few were graduating to the glories of red plush, what fellowship was there for this worshipper of beauty, whose very opium dreams were filled with visions of a fearsome loveliness? The answer is, none. Had Poe's lines been cast with that group of men who were making a literary oasis in New England, it is possible that he might have been braced to a steadier manliness and a saner ideal—only possible, for his was not a pliant nature. Elsewhere in our land any real human fellowship was out of the question. We need seek no farther than this for the source of his eerie horrors. To bear the burden of an isolation produced by a defect to which the world imputes no moral significance, is quite hard enough. Milton halted noticeably under the load; and even Beethoven sometimes moved with wearied pace. But to bear the burden of an isolation produced by traits to which the world attaches the stigma of damning sin—that is a task which no human being ever performed and kept his perfect sanity.

Among his contemporaries, Poe had three titles to celebrity: his critiques, his poems, and his stories. The first are known to us mainly

by the tradition of their cutting savagery. The modern who takes the trouble to read these much discussed articles will usually find himself agreeing with the critic's judgment; but wondering what there was in the case to make the judgment worth passing. Poe never learned that it is a waste of lather to shave an ass. Yet all his critiques are not of this kind. Poe was the first to discover the genius of Hawthorne; the first to hail Longfellow as the foremost of American poets—this in spite of his foolish charges of plagiarism against that kindly man. Poe picked Tennyson as the greatest poet of the day; he championed the merits of Dickens and George Eliot when these authors were almost unknown; and his estimate of the scope of Dickens's powers has been confirmed by time.

When we turn from Poe's critiques to his imaginative work, we pass from cleverness to genius at a step. Here his lack of "scholarship," that prized possession of those who sit in the grand-stand and tell how the game should be played, was a help, rather than a hindrance. He has literary faults, even here; but they are not vital ones. He mars some of his best passages by the introduction of seraphs and Psyches and eidolons and other needless things. His heroines always have a beauty suggestive, to the modern reader, of the tubercle bacillus; his heroes are high-born misanthropes; his surroundings are tarns and castles and perishing domains. In a word, though not of the world, he could not wholly escape its influence; for these things were reckoned in Poe's time the indispensables of art. They had a number of queer hallucinations in those days, when you stop to think of it. They even imagined that Fenimore Cooper wrote English, and that William Gilmore Sims produced literature.



To many people, Poe is the poet of a single poem, "The Raven." His really great verses, indeed, are remarkably few; but I think there are several which surpass the rather artificial perfection of this the most famous of the list. "The Haunted Palace" has always seemed to me the foremost of Poe's poems, with "The Bells" a close second; and only after "The Conqueror Worm" and "The Sleeper" had received their due would I turn to the bird of ill omen, on the pallid bust of Pallas, just above the chamber door.

Poe defined poetry as the rhythmical creation of beauty; and he held himself rigorously to that standard. Measured by this test, he would be the greatest of American poets; with Keats and Tennyson and Shelley as his sole superiors in the language. But I do not think any one but Poe ever seriously accepted that definition. It measures "Kublai Khan" perfectly; and "The Lotus Eaters," and the "Ode to

a Nightingale," and most of "Prometheus Unbound." But will any one pretend that it can be stretched to cover "Childe Harold," or that it even hints at the philosophy and insight and melody and majesty that make up "Othello" and "Macbeth"? Yet, faulty as was the definition, one cannot help wishing it had found a wider acceptance. If Browning had been convinced that poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty, what quarrels and headaches and jawaches we should have been spared! It would have helped still more if some other missionary could have made Browning believe that poetry is the rhythmical expression of sense.



Poetry, I take it, is the articulate language of the emotions; as music is their inarticulate language. Doubtless this, too, is a faulty definition; but it is better than none. The emotion may be the love of sheer beauty, as with Keats and Poe. It may be the love of intense action, as with Scott; or of struggle, as with Byron; or of masterful power, as with Kipling. It may be the fiery complex of loves and hates which we find in Shelley; or the greater, calmer, and more ordered complexity of Shakespeare. It may ask—and seek to answer—the question of the ages, as does Job; or tingle us with its daring defiance, as does Omar Khayyam-Fitzgerald. So long as the emotion gives the key-note and moulds the style of the work, that work is poetry. Poe touched but one string of the world harp; and that only to melodies of the churchyard. He was a musician's poet; his faults and virtues are the faults and virtues of music; as witness his over-use of the refrain. To me, he is more like Chopin than like any man of letters whatsoever. But within his narrow range Poe was technical master of his art. He never wrote a poem to compare with "Sir Launfal"; but he would have starved sooner than send forth lines like "Earth gets its price for what earth gives us," or "Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold"—lines that splutter and sizzle like coffee spilled on a camp-fire.

And this technical mastery is yet more in evidence in the best of his short stories. The flawless literary workmanship, the balanced sentences which somehow are never monotonous, the perfect unity of plan and singleness of effect which are shown in a dozen of Poe's tales have never been surpassed. They may deal with utter impossibilities—but you never feel this while reading them. The intense horror never goes far enough to produce the revulsion of disbelief, the suggestion is always kept a suggestion; and when you reach the climax of "Ligeia" or "The Tell-tale Heart," you feel that you have been an eye-witness to the terrors set forth. The only time Poe scores a failure is when he tries to be humorous; and then he scores very bad failures indeed. Humor implies sympathy with one's fellows, and that quality was very

nearly left out of Poe's make-up. He despised most of his contemporaries, and was totally indifferent to the rest. The only persons he ever loved were his cousin-wife and himself; and the second-named passion began earlier and lasted longer than the first.

Leaving out the abortive "grotesques," Poe's tales, like ancient Gaul, may be divided into three parts. There are those which for want of a better word we must call the romances: "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Ligeia," and many others. There are the studies of monomania: as "The Tell-tale Heart" and "The Black Cat." There are the stories with a scientific basis: as "The Descent into the Maelstrom," "The Gold-bug," and the three detective stories. These last have been the subject of many acrid and amusing debates. It is charged that Conan Doyle modelled Sherlock Holmes on the lines of Poe's Frenchman, Dupin; and that the whole spring of the tales whereof the cocaine-using Londoner is the hero may be found in Poe. I believe the charge to be equally true and unimportant. If one does pleasing work in an acceptable fashion, why should it be counted a reproach that he learned his trade under a competent workman? To my mind, Poe has few greater claims on modern gratitude than that of being literary grandfather to "The Five Orange Pips," "The Priory School," "The Hound of the Baskervilles," and "The Second Stain." I do not include "The Dancing Men." For this particular tale to be found in the possession of one who had read "The Gold-bug" seems less a case of inheritance than of larceny.



The studies in monomania have never, I think, been equalled; not even by Maupassant. That bit in "The Tell-tale Heart" which describes the long terror of the old man sitting up in bed, trying to persuade himself that the noise he had heard was *not* at his chamber door, is one of the most fiendishly perfect things in literature. But I believe that Poe reached the climax of his powers in his romances. "The Pit and the Pendulum" alone would have made the reputation of a lesser author; the weird yet ordered horror of that tale haunted my boyhood dreams for months. Yet if I could save but one of Poe's works from destruction, that one would be "The Fall of the House of Usher." That is a tale as near to absolute perfection of its kind as human wit can either perform or appreciate. Study it over and over, pick it to pieces in anywise you will; the wonderful mastery is still there, showing ever brighter the longer you look. By the way, Debussy is writing a symphonic poem on that theme. It should be well worth hearing.

And as if to burn redder the mark on this man's brow which sets

him apart, these tales in which his genius rises highest are likewise those in which his craft of ghastly dissection outstrips anything of the kind in literature. Other men have written tales of horror. Kipling, in his "End of the Passage," takes you through a house of chilly terror as real and fearsome as anything ever fashioned by Poe. But somehow Kipling never lets you forget that just without the enchanted walls is a world where the sun is shining, and where men and women are working and making love in healthy human fashion. Poe gives you no such relief. In his tales of horror the charnel house does not merely dominate the landscape; it *is* the landscape. The ghoulishness of Kipling is incidental; that of Poe is inherent.

A great, a wonderful, a morbid genius; that, at the last as at the first, is one's judgment of Poe. We may mourn for his wasted life, but not for his early death. The best of him was dead already. The flawless taste had failed; the unrivalled craftsmanship was lost; the jingle of "For Annie" had followed the melody of "The Haunted Palace"; "The House of Usher" had given place to the transcendental folly of "Eureka." Whiskey and opium had done their perfect work. The evil things in robes of sorrow had finished the ruin of the monarch's high estate; it was but the husk of greatness that was borne to the hospital on that night in the lonesome October of sixty years ago. The symphony was over; it was time for the leader to go. It was best, it was kindest, that the mumming should cease with the music, that the score of the haunting harmonies be intrusted to the world's safe keeping; and the rest be left to grow

a dim remembered story
Of the old time entombed.



WHEN PHOEBE LOOKS

(A TOAST)

BY ANNETTE WILLIAMS

SWEAR she is innocent, swear she is wise
(Feminine witchcraft of seeming!)
Mockery, mystery, promise her eyes,
Tempting with depths they reveal yet disguise—
Here's to the spell that in woman's glance lies
(Subtle and magical meaning!)

THE GREEN-ROOM

By Will Levington Comfort

The little toy dog is covered with dust,
But sturdy and stanch he stands;
And the little tin soldier is red with rust,
And his musket moulds in his hands.
Time was when the little toy dog was new
And the soldier was passing fair,
And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue
Kissed them and put them there.

—EUGENE FIELD

THEY were children together, merest children. He had the odd and rather winning name of Shelley Torns, and she was Martha Bridges. Most simply and quickly they met and loved. All that they had they gave to each other, and the world rushed on. Those who lived, not less precariously, but possibly in a greater width of sin—makers, all, of the vaudeville game—such regarded Shelley Torns and the girl with amusement and affection and wonder, for the pair were happy mornings, happy twilights, happy in their work. Each to the other was a sunny cosmos.

It was their business to sing and dance and joke together for fifteen minutes twice a day. Shelley Torns could sing, and Martha expressed herself admirably with her marvellous dancing limbs; but when they danced and sang together, neither the secrets of art were opened nor the founts of harmony drawn dry. Still, all was well. They were fillers of the profession, the unheralded but very desirable details of a programme. It was a goodly life that fitted their youth, a life of trains, hotels, draughts, trunks, delays, and changes. They drew eternal inspiration from the banks of lit faces everywhere, snatched a sweet romance between-times, and took the hedges and ditches of the game tranquilly and together.

As a matter of course, they married, and, just as naturally, one of them went down into the valley of the shadow and found a queer little god there. Up to this time Shelley Torns had held dreams, despite the artist in his soul, not of opulence, but of financial quietude. These were wrecked. The babe caused the spring end of a vaudeville contract to be broken as well. Throughout an eternal summer they remained

at a farm-house in upper New York State (the same house wherein Martha came to be), and the young father could not forget that they might have been earning fair money at the summer garden theatres.

Shelley Torns rebelled—not particularly at the little boy; certainly not at the woman; but at some vague source of things.

And as he rebelled in that long yellow summer, he made hay and other stuff of the field and farm. He had demanded to work, and Farmer Bridges had demanded to pay. Eighteen dollars the month, or some such arrangement was entered into. It grew hastily ridiculous to the singer, and savagely hard, that ten-hour daily task. No one knows how hard, save one who has sung a song for money. Still, he would not change it while he was forced to remain. Another thing was hard to this fledgling father. Martha was no longer a sweetheart, but a rapt and busy little slave, untimed except to the voice and needs of the new lord; so completely a mother, in fact, that she did not perceive the vast trouble of the sire.

He would appear with the dews, when the day had all but expired, the heart of the simple young male within him crying out for the old lithe arms of the dancing girl, warm, strong, slender, and the uplifted face. . . . Just enough of the honeymoon had been given, and an approach to perfection so close, according to his lights, that he was lost, crushed, because her arms were so often folded, her eyes down-turned, and the mother-breast filled. How young was Shelley Torns and how sorrowful!

"But we must go out on the circuit in September," he managed to say one night at the farm-house, when August had spent the passion of the land.

"Oh, I think we had better not, for John's sake, dear. . . . Hand me that powder-puff, please. John's little neck——"

"But we *must* go, Martha! It is our life!" There was a terror in his face she did not notice.

"Really it is n't necessary, and John is so, so tiny! And think, dear, what it would mean to you—a winter of complete rest! Think what this summer in the outdoors has done for your strength to draw upon in the future."

"Yes, I have thought and thought already. My throat is filled with seven kinds of sticky pollen, and I have been dying by inches of loneliness and silence; and you are soft and out of training and there is not a dance in you; and suppose we stop for a season—my God, Martha, we could never get back! You know the competition, the novelties. We would be forgotten as the dead are. I say we must begin rehearsals—and go out in September!"

"Shelley Torns, darling, I have n't forgotten how to dance," she answered, "nor you how to sing. I am so happy that I could dance

my heart out, only—only some woman will have to take care of John. It will be hard for our little boy, Shelley, the night travel and the change of rooms."

"You and I work together," he finished, holding back from his voice the acid that was biting his heart. "If we are farmers over one winter, we are farmers always. We'll have to get some one in each town to take care of John while we work!" . . . Many times they talked it over after that, occasionally in the midst of the night, when the little boy aroused them. . . . Martha worried because John did not cry more.

"He is so noble, I am sometimes afraid, Shelley!" she would say, as he turned his eyes away from the lamp. "Look at him! A little hurt never pulls a whimper out of him, and often I have to wake him up to feed him!" . . . So it was that Shelley Torns who hungered to seize the woman was restrained by the mother.

Now and then when he was left alone with the new thing, he would pull back the arcanum of coverlets. . . . Yes, it was a formation human. The fingers were so slim and long, the bare tow head so genially round; lips so facile, sounds so inimitable! Shelley Torns was forced to think. The endless wonder was that this man-atom, living upon another plane so completely, must needs have a woman of earth to keep him there. Still, the father did not really feel the twinings of the thing about his vitals. He was too young; he loved the mother and wanted her whole heart. Moreover, the days made him very weary. It seemed so empty, so indirect, to the city-bred one—this waiting upon a season's fruitage for one's substance. Things were managed better in New York.

And yet, once or twice he was surprised at himself, in the last days at the farm. His thoughts of Martha, as he drove the team homeward in the twilight, were complicated by the little boy submerged in linens and flannels. . . . Once he thrust his finger into the slim little fist, partly open like a trap. The warm damp thing closed—bound itself about the hardened finger—and the nerves of the man registered an everlasting impression upon his brain.

They were driving from the farm to the station at last, the three alone, a drowsy dusk all about the rig. The little town was some miles ahead, and the road ran through swails and sloughs, groves and graveyards and orchards. Over all was a warm ripe wind. . . . Shelley Torns felt the lover rise in greatness within him. In truth, Martha had been won, but this little boy seemingly had intervened and left his father without a heart-home. . . . Already Shelley Torns felt the zest of New York, that sublime stimulus. A night's ride and the

marvel-world of running things would crowd his senses. Here was the utmost woman of it all—whom he had won. He forgot the unadjectived third for a moment in the dream of a fresh conquest of the glorious Martha—now, in the warm, sweet breath of the night.

She brushed him carelessly with her arm. Strange little sounds came from her throat, rhythm or knowledge having nothing to do. He bent and kissed her on the cheek.

She sighed quickly. "John, darling," she whispered to the manikin, "your father loves us very much!"

He felt the passion oozing from him. "Martha," he said, fluttered and stumbling, "think of the old hotel nights! To-morrow we will be back on salary. . . . Does n't it seem dark and sweet to breathe?"

"Yes," she answered, with a tremble in her low tone; "I have thought of those old hotel nights. They were good, but incomplete after all! My God, Shelley, think of the dreadfulness—if you and I had to be alone now—without John!"

He did not speak. After an interminable distance the station lights appeared. They could not afford a sleeper. Martha dozed prettily with the babe. The man thought of the city and the work. Early the next morning they met the crowd in the Grand Central Station. Shelley Torns was carrying the child. Somehow the old haunts shamed him with the burden. It was not that he met any one he knew; but he faced New York, and he felt earthy, shy from the fields; the artist and the parent were incompatible. . . . He trembled for the woman during their first performance, but in the fulness of her heart, Martha danced to fit the managerial eye. The act was even and desirable.

John passed from arm to arm in their brief intervals of work and rehearsal, from chambermaid to prima donna; from the wives of knife-throwers and acrobats to the latest flames of the incomparable baritone. He won them all; his conduct left nothing to be desired, save to Martha, who worried still at his stoicism. The winter came late, but tightened brutally, and the Torns were carried far north into New England. Draughty chair-cars, the pent, drouthish air of upper berths, vast chilled rooms in under-heated hotels, bus-rides in the night, over crackling roads in the dead, stinging cold—through all these and countless other contingencies which kept the mother heart in continual agony, the little boy preserved his life and held his peace like one who is bound to win. . . . But there came a terrible night away up in the peak of the New England coast, the night that Martha had feared, the night that had seemed inevitable, though unspoken, to the others.

That town was set upon an angle of land, rugged as a point of amethyst and jutting out into the sea. The North Atlantic was bring-

ing its wildest and iciest gale to beat upon the rock, on the day that the vaudeville people came. The natives had brown, angular faces, lame to all smiling, in that little austere village, and the play and the theatre were regarded among the dissipations of the uncherished younger set. A grim and ancient building was the hotel, and it had faced the sea so long, as to have sucked the bitterness of death into its gray walls. The theatre was a town-hall, cold to assemblies these many weeks. . . . The woman who held John in the green-room—the monologue artist had named it from the mould upon the walls—screamed while the Torns were at work. Martha rushed from the stage, answering the scream. The care-taker of the town-hall, one of the elder curfew people, made a significant remark: "It is a visitation of Providence!"

All suddenly, in the midst of his father's song, the little boy had departed from health, in a fashion not strange to babes.

Even the doctor had the coldness of his coast and the granite of it in his face; yet he took the child upon his bony lap; and the sea-mothers came in to watch the players weep and to mourn with them in their waiting, tearless way. The green-room was made hot with crackling logs. Shelley Torns remembered these things.

"If he does n't have a second convulsion, he will likely live," the doctor said, looking down at the imploring face of the mother at his knees.

The father watched and watched and paced the floor. Hours passed. Series after series of new terrors assailed his brain. The women stayed. This grim intruding world and his own suffering angered Shelley Torns to a point of madness. He felt that Martha might have saved the babe alone—or Martha and himself and their love! . . . This old human rock of a doctor and the whispering women, women of uncharted hearts and desert faces, settling like vultures to feed upon his grief—these had ignited and were fanning his brain to an expression of violence. . . . He ran out of the room at last, through the winter-vault of the auditorium, out into the deserted street which roared with the din of the sea and the havoc of the gale.

His own faculties answered storm for storm, and out of the clash were hewn thoughts of tragedy in all depth and clearness. . . . Tiny and impotent, unformed for protest, the little boy awaited the decision of Nature. . . . "I, Shelley Torns, singer, have cried out against this little soul in my heart—I, the father—and would have graven upon it my own devilish selfishness, were it not for the mother's power of purity. I would have deformed it with a man's passion—my little boy—now at the gates of life and death. I caused it to be brought here that I might sing for money before crowds who suffered me to pass, while they waited for worthier performances. . . .

I would have taken the mother's heart from you, little boy, because I wanted it all—more than the sweet mother could give——”

Original from the block, his evils were sculptured from the chaos of the storms; and about these evils now were gathered black pictures from memory. . . . In that memorable ride from the farm-house to the station, he had turned sullen, because the mother had spoken of the babe, unconsciously breaking the point of his fervor in that ardent autumn night. . . . Wrong after wrong to that round little head which had borne so much in a few brief weeks—that tender little boy, babe of his own blood, who did not rebuke his father, nor scream his wrongs! . . . And that little boy meant a man, and he, the father, Shelley Torns, had destroyed the man; and in some far heaven or hell, he must meet that man face to face.

The tableau in the green-room returned to mind—the figure of the loved woman at the doctor's gaunt knees; the babe, so ill, so wan, so unexpressed, fashioned to live and tell his story, designed to be nurtured by the mother and defended by the father for his chance at the large tasks of men—John Torns, who had no voice in his coming, no will in his passing. Sheath after sheath of the man's heart was torn away until there remained to rival his love for the woman, only that which had been hitherto unmanifested, the purer passion of fatherhood.

“My babe must live—must be made glad that he lived—must be paid back for my baseness in services of love and blood!” This was the ultimatum, when storm met storm out in that furious night.

He hastened back into the building and to the green-room, carrying a blast of cold air and the winter in his garments. There had been a change. The women were gathered closer about the old man, closer to the fireplace. Martha turned to the open door a hollow, waxy face, a blighted thing, which tore out the very roots of her husband's sanity. Her voice was unknown to him and hateful:

“In the name of God, Shelley Torns, go away and don't bring the cold here!”

He faltered an instant, closing the door behind with a slow, fumbling movement. The light had expired from his eyes, yet they were horribly held by his wife's face. . . . The doctor's rough gray head bent over the centre of things. One of the women was whispering, as if to some one deaf. The sound penetrated to the farthest angles of the room. And then the singer was obsessed by a mad savage. His hands and his voice were raised to the old sea mothers.

“Quick, out with you—out of here!”

They arose mumbling; their good hearts outraged. The doctor looked up in a quick, knowing way at the menacing figure of the husband, and turned with a mute appeal to Martha, who took little notice. Shelley Torns slammed the door upon the last of the women; then

faced the old man. Suddenly, he darted forward and seized the child in his arms. The doctor dared not resist for the child's sake. The crazed player's hands and face and garments were chilled from the night. Torns strode rapidly up and down the room, his eyes concentrated upon the little head. Martha ran at his side, praying. The doctor watched them from his seat by the fire. Only a few moments passed when he spoke, low and sorrowfully:

"Look at the babe's hands. I'm afraid it has come—the second visitation. . . . You mean very well, my son—but——"

Martha saw the stiffened arms, the darkened face beneath the covers. Her cry, utterly beyond the suggestion of written words, availed nothing. What was in the brain of Shelley Torns no one knows. He must have seen; yet he strode up and down, carrying his burden lightly.

"Oh, Shelley, darling," the woman implored at last, "give him to me, to his mother! Our baby—our little baby is dying—would you keep him from his mother?"

"You would have sent me away," he said dully. "You ordered me out into the storm—as if I were not the father of this boy! He shall stay with me, and he shall not die!"

There was something in the old doctor that did not make for flight. His work was done. The brave little unspoken soul had risen. The show people came, and Martha was with them, mercifully dulled with drugs. Gray morning filled the green-room and Shelley Torns was singing. It was a dreadful hour. The doctor watched the drama of the players until the end—the father singing and pacing the floor with brute flesh in his arms. It all came over the mind of Shelley Torns when pale sunlight was in the window. His God had not forgiven him, nor his child. Martha was a stranger. . . . He placed the dead child upon a pillowed chair at last, and met the eyes of his wife, as she left her friends and knelt beside it. The doctor was leaving and he followed the old man out of the green-room.

"Am I a murderer?" he asked in a slow, harsh way.

"I would hardly say that," the other answered. "We were fearing a second attack. Still, your hands—you had just come in from the cold—my poor boy. I am sorry for you!"

It was the next afternoon and all was over but the memories. Shelley Torns and his wife met in the twilight of the hotel corridor. They had not spoken since the end.

"Please give me enough money to go home," she said. "I am going home."

He gave her all he had. Without speaking, she returned a portion and entered the room, where he later found his own things left behind.

The looted, rudderless human drifted to New York. For weeks he spent his time upon the streets by day; in a high tenement room at

night. Upon his face was graven a subtler ruin than that of drugs or drink. Without Martha, he could obtain no engagement; he was refused at any price. Queer artist that he was, he felt no shame at the realization of his commercial worthlessness alone; only it made him feel the more tragically the need of the woman in every thought and fruition of his life. Money was gone and the ability to earn it, his personality, his voice itself. Something in the appearance and face of the young man placed him among the great outcast to the eyes of those who hire singers. In his heart-starvation, Shelley Torns had forgotten his linen and his lips.

There was a buffet finally in the lower end of town, the management of which consented to allow him to sing for his bread and sausage. When he happened to sing to please the desultory ear, his tenement room was paid. Thus the winter passed, the boy in a dreadful dream. Throughout the uncertain balances of his artist's brain, no thought of reconciliation was conjured. He had read in her eyes that he was the murderer of her son—that was the end. Martha was lost to him, but loved—God only knows how she was loved and the price his sensitive soul paid for that night of tragedy in upper New England. Strange again that all the gladness of his life was concentrated (in those wistful dreams of his) upon that autumn night of their ride from the farm to the station on the way to New York. . . . To have Martha with him again in the dusky witchery of that night—with the little boy at her breast—but he could not think farther and live! The memory evolving beyond this point strangled his vitality.

One night in the saloon, he looked up from a song at a little old man standing close, a strange, wee figure with overmuch white hair and a long coat that had nothing to do with prevalence.

"Come with me," the stranger said, and Shelley Torns obeyed. It was midnight and the journey covered an hour in the subway and afoot. "Listen," said the queer individual at last, as they paused before a building dark from the outside. "This is my club—the Lost Artist's Club. You will sing for artists here, men who have failed as you have, men of the vital spark, but not the balance nor the body nor the steady hand. You have lost yours, young man, or never had it, so do not laugh at your peers. I am rich and this is my hobby. Ah, but I love my artists!"

A strange drinking throng, effete, stimulated, variously replete with lesions of the body. They were generously supplied with all that they wished to eat and drink, and beds were above. What a charity! Look for him in New York, this oddest and most lovable little old man, but you must be a decayed artist to find him. Shelley Torns sang, hardly disturbing the tumult of voices at first, yet his enchanted brain awoke. He felt a tithe, a semblance of appreciation, and heard a faint applause

with a gladness that was pitiful. The old days of conquest rushed back. Slowly the men turned from their talk, as he sang again one of the little love-songs which had failed in vaudeville. Long afterward, toward morning, indeed, he never could tell how nor why, though it may have been the wine which the artists pressed upon him, Shelley Torns sang his own song, the lyric and the music of the little boy.

. . . He saw bending toward him a thin, devastated face. It stood out from the throng with a warm and instant appeal—as if he had known before the soul behind that sunken flesh, as if a kindly elder brother had embodied it in some past life. The moment was indescribable to him. He quite forgot that he was singing, yet his own dominant sorrow lost none of its poignancy, even though it mingled with the tragedy of that human face which his singing had ignited. That face had looked at death; upon it was subtly, yet deeply, painted lofty failures and despicable reactions.

Shelley Torns had won them all, yet he moved toward one uplifted hand as he finished, and sat down before a pair of dry burning black eyes.

"Why did you sing that, Torns?"

"I do not know. Because I could not help it."

"Drink something, if you care. Did you ever sing it before?"

The man spoke like an Englishman. His linen was clean; his clothing shabby.

"Once before—the night I murdered my little boy."

"Ah, would you mind telling me about it—the whole story, please?"

There was no thought of resistance. Torns whispered of Martha, and the winning of her, which had been to him and always should be the supreme achievement. Softly, hungrily, as was the wont of his own bereft life, he dwelt upon that night of the ride from the farm to the station, the sweet still air, the twilight, the dusk, the flight, the woman, and the babe at her breast like Horatio holding the bridge.

"I would give my voice, my little bit of sanity," he panted, "for that ride again with Martha and the little boy. And yet I was only a sullen animal—then!"

From New York up the circuit, the story leaped from town to town. Upper New England and the night of the wintry gale on the bleak coast. To the black eyes that burned upon him now, Shelley Torns, a vibrant figure, revealed the father, as well as the lover of Martha—the father who had learned to love too late.

"It was not that I seized the child from the doctor's knees," he was whispering, as if explaining to God. "I was mad then, utterly mad. It was not that I carried him against my cold damp coat. I did not know what I was doing until hours afterward—they told me I sang this song as I walked—when he was cold, cold as his mother's heart to

me. . . . What kills was that I did not know him before! That I did not see the Martha in him! That I did not feel my flesh and my future in him—that he was son of mine!”

Shelley Torns gulped his drink. Subconscious but perfect drama lived in his conclusion of the whole matter, thus: “What an awful beast I must have been!”

The intent, listening face smiled. The man arose unsteadily, drew the shades from the nearest window, opened it wide, thrust his head out, and breathed.

“Come here,” he said.

The singer obeyed.

“Put your head out!” he went on quietly. “Smell it. Smell the spring in it! This is the first day of spring! Think how the country roads will look this morning. See the sun coming out warm. Think how that country road of *yours* will look—that road where all your memory-life is gathered. We all have our high moments, our memories and our roads, Shelley Torns. Some time all of us who think and do at all are carried high up to the origin of things. Likely as not we miss the meaning, but certainly for the moment we live.”

The inscrutable wreck of a man went on musingly:

“And so yours was a country road in the dusk with your woman and your babe. You were a boy, and he was a boy, and she was the mother of you both in heart. . . . All in a country rig, the fields behind, New York ahead——”

“Please don’t. You hurt, sir!” whimpered Shelley Torns.

The other did not seem to notice, but breathed deeply of the morning. “Think of that country road this morning,” he said. “It has not rained. The turf is hard to the heart from frosts, but wet on the surface from the sudden warmth of the sun—all alive on the surface, this resurrection morn in the country! . . . You *are walking* along that road, Shelley Torns, with New York behind—and before you—white with waiting—Martha——!”

The singer stepped back from the window, shivering with antagonism, yet held by some psychic force of the man.

“We all have our moments and our country roads, sometimes English roads in dear old Kent, the garden, Shelley Torns,” the stranger resumed, as one rapt in pictures of his past. “Some of us even have our Marthas! . . . Oh, Father Bountiful!”

He called to the little old man who was host and master of ceremonies, who left a group and stepped forward eagerly.

“Give this boy ten dollars. He is going home to the love of his youth, Father. . . . Oh, God, if I were as white-souled as he! . . . And yet this boy thinks he is damned forever! . . . There is humor, Father Bountiful, in being a youth. . . . No, I

am quite drunk enough, thank you. I am going home, too,—upstairs!" He laughed.

A country road at night, black as the last paths of sin, running with small lake and river systems and beaten by wind-blown sheets of rain. The evening of that first day of spring. Shelley Torns has left New York behind; the dim station lights of the little country town are left behind. Before him are miles of rain-covered road, through swails and sloughs, groves and grave-yards and orchards. All these are lit at intervals from the ripping cracks in the sky.

The first mile is not half-won, yet rain and mud can add no ruin to his garments. He runs when the lightning makes the footing clear. The old splendor of youth has returned; his veins are dilated, his heart singing. From that lost artist's brain of brooding desolation has come the rekindling of Shelley Torns. In a flash of the old acumen, the English stranger has shown the boy what means real human debris, and the chaos which rules the human heart when hope has winged away.

The returning one sang as he ran in the lightning flashes. . . . Martha Bridges had once been won by a boy. She would be won again by the man of that boy. . . . The new-young heart of Shelley Torns told him this must be; the listening stranger had promised it; the lightning carved it in letters of hope. It was as sure as the virtue of the warm rain upon the frozen heart of the soil. . . . And John, the little boy, John, would forgive him. This was real to him now, as real as the God of little boys, who called them unto him and made his Heaven thereof. . . . Martha would forgive him. It may have been that she had forgiven him long since; that she had written him to come home to her. Having no address, how could he have known? He had not reported at their old headquarters for weeks—not since they had refused him at any price. . . . He ran, his lips forming and reforming the words, "white with waiting—white with waiting——"

Faint lights in the eyes of the struggling, gasping figure in the highway. They were on the left, with a background of woods; and the long, low house sentinelled by a mountain-range of barns—all this the lightning had made clear!

For the first time on the journey, the heart of Shelley Torns faltered. The next few moments meant the verdict of life or death. All that he could win or lose; all that God had given him to win or lose in this life was in that house.

At the gate he stopped to breathe. Suddenly, in a spitting snake of light, the twin pines in the huge yard were carved against the rushing clouds. The crash like a splitting world desolated his senses ere

the sweep of light was past. He was clinging to the pickets of the gate, when his scattered faculties crawled back, and the burnt smell in the air was washed out by the rain hastily, as if it were not meant for the nostrils of man in the plan of Nature.

He fumbled for the latch of the gate. A dog barked dismally from the barns. Lights moved within the house. . . . Shelley Torns was singing from some inner volition. The front door opened, and a woman rushed out into the torrent to meet him. An after flash showed her empty outstretched arms as she ran. It appealed to him strangely—her empty arms.

The family was gathered in the sitting-room to hear his story, Farmer Bridges, the elder Martha, and others. He could not speak; his brain was still dazed from the shock. He could only peer into the paradise he had regained—the eyes of a face close to his, a face white with waiting.

"He is ill from the lightning. He must not try to speak to-night!" Martha commanded. "Ah, my lover, my tired lover, come with me and rest—to our room!"

Up the stairway, he followed, the old farm-house scent in his nostrils, his life rushing back, his heart healed. The room was dark. The door closed upon them. Dully he fingered the wall for the old place of the matches, but her arms found him, her lips, and he forgot.

"My husband, just a minute," she whispered at last; "stand out in the hall!"

He obeyed and the door was shut upon him. He heard her fingers in the tin match-box, heard the flare and the lifting and placing of a lamp chimney. . . . Then there was a creaking sound, as of furniture being moved across the rag-carpeted floor. It was a familiar creak.

His mind caught it all with a stab of the old pain. She was sparing him the sight of that which she had not suffered to be removed. . . . The closet door was opened, the object thrust within, the door shut again. In the dark, with a door between, he saw it all, the woman and the wooden thing. She called at last, softly, eagerly:

"Lover mine—come to me!"

Her empty arms were outstretched in the lamp-light, those warm, lithe, slender arms, the haven of his dreams in hunger and thirst and madness. Yet he halted a second, looking beyond them, to the place where the little black walnut cradle had been by the bedside.



THE TURQUOISE RING

By Karl von Kraft

“NO, my friend, I am not superstitious, but you yourself shall judge whether I am right in refusing ever to part with my so beautiful turquoise.”

“It is really perfect,” I said, thinking more of the Contessa’s matchless hand than of the jewel it seemed moulded to display.

“Yes,” she assented. “In Petersburg, in Paris, in Teheran, in Mexico, and in your—how do you say it?—‘little old New York’—I have never seen its like. Sometimes as I look at its soft sea-tones, I fancy it actually gazing back at me—lovingly, understandingly. See, is it not so?” And then after a moment, “I think I want you to hear about Luigi—and the ring.”

The Contessa took a final sip of her Mocha.

“I was born, you know, in December—they call it ‘the crown of good fortune.’ So it is my birthstone, this *turkis*, as our Florentine lapidaries still name it. However, I had never owned one till—but that is my story.

“One day—I was then sixteen, and almost a woman—I was idling before the quaint shops on the Jeweller’s Bridge across the Arno, when I espied this superb gem displayed in a small window.”

The Contessa held out the turquoise, but I only breathed a kiss upon the pink tapering fingers, and checked the loving words I longed to pour out.

She seemed scarce to notice—the past was living again; and I sighed. Would she ever forget?

“That love of a ring, my friend,” she went on, “it fairly called me, from its curiously-wrought casket of tawny gold. The setting, too, was a rare thing, as you see; and has a history—for another day,” she smiled. “From the instant my eyes rested upon the pale beauty of that patrician thing I knew I must possess it. I tell you my soul leaped toward it with a passion of desire—I, who never cared for jewels, and wear them not at all: except always my precious luck-stone.”

She paused to lift her hand and look fixedly at the ring, turning it slowly upon her finger. I have never seen that look in any other woman’s eyes: inscrutable, seer-like—and loving. Her snowy bosom heaved, a deeper rose-glow suffused her dear cheek, she seemed to see

into the past, and perhaps also the veil of the future was parted for an instant before those great brown eyes. . . . When she spoke again it was with a softness expressive of her tender mood. Ah, how I adored you then—and now, Contessa!

"The ring," she resumed, "perfectly fitted my girlish finger—that was twenty years ago, my friend—so in a few little minutes I was running along the Lung Arno and threading the other streets on the way to our old *palazza*. Think of it, in my glee I had utterly forgotten that the poor cousin Luigi was still waiting to take me home in his *fiacre*!

"The first person I met was my old nurse Giulietta, dear and dumpy, a bundle of motherhood and *martinette*. I held up my hand, demanding to know if the ring was not beautiful.

"A turquoise! Ah! *Multa bella*! Thou shalt now have fortunate love—with constancy and happiness!' cried Giulietta. 'My little lamb has chosen a true luck-stone. But thou must never put it off. No, not even for one small hour,' and she wagged a pudgy finger. 'That would bring the evil fortune. Ah, now my lord Luigi—'

"Hush, thou foolish old match-maker,' I laughed, stopping her speech with a kiss—but my heart surged with the joy of her prophecy. And from that hour my *turkis* has been twined about with the strands of my destiny. Oh, I do not know how it may be, but so it is."

"God send with it always prosperous love—for us both!" said I softly.

"Yes, for us both, my friend," she whispered, but her thoughts were far away, I knew.

"Well, that very day my life began to bud. Count Luigi, my distant cousin, and heir to the finest estates in all Lombardy, had long been visiting his uncle, whose *palazza* adjoined that of my father. Daily we were together, like the happy children we still seemed. His tall, military figure, slender and supple as one of his native poplars, often rode beside me down the long over-arched vistas of the *jardino publico*, or accompanied my carriage on wonder-drives to Vallambrosa and our villa at Fiesole.

"What would you have? We loved and—we loved. It was our whole day—the very heaven of all hope, as cloudless as my cerulean turquoise. And on that day—the day I bought my gem—we were with the consent of our families betrothed.

"That night as Giulietta attended me I was about to draw the ring from my finger and lay it in my jewel case.

"What wouldst thou do, thou thoughtless child!' cried Nurse almost harshly. 'Throw away thy good luck? Are noble lovers like the Count Luigi then so plenty that thou wouldst toss him aside like a rose plucked in the Boboli gardens?'

"Toss my Luigi aside? Oh, Giulietta!"

"Have I not told thee? *Never*, my lambkin, *never lay aside thy turquoise*. If thou dost part with it, thy luck will leave thee, and with it the constancy of thy lover."

"In her earnestness Giulietta blinked solemnly into my eyes—dear old owl—and gripped my wrist until it ached. Tell me, my American friend, why did I not heed that warning? I do not know. *Ay di mi!* So I only laughed affectionately and patted her leathery cheek—but for an instant an ominous chill swept through my veins as the full moon suddenly hid behind a sombre cloud. I remember it well. Do you believe in omens?"

"But I cast off the foreboding, and that night went to sleep with my turquoise laid close against the cheek on which Luigi had pressed his lingering betrothal kiss."

"After that my life flowed along as do other lives—we were wedded, romanced in a summer villa at Monza, and tasted every bliss of young love. And always I wore my turquoise ring, with no other jewel at all. And always my joy and good fortune were constant, though I rarely thought of the ring as the talisman of my happiness. But you shall see; you shall see."

"When the winter came we returned to Florence and occupied an old *palazza* of my father's. We lived in rooms that had been scarcely more than opened since the time when, four centuries ago, the second duke of our line had taken a wife from among the Visconti, and built this huge barrack to house his bride. There was some new furniture, but for the most part the old arrangements had been restored, and many an hour Luigi and I amused ourselves by weaving fancies about the old courts and halls, repeopling them with the throngs which had gayly colored them in the days of the old duke's splendor."

"One morning in December—it was the fourteenth, just two days before my birthday—I laid aside my ring. It had become too tight. In my bedroom was the same tawny gold case from which, in the little shop on the Jeweller's Bridge, it first sent forth its enchantment. There I thoughtlessly placed it. Alas, old Giulietta was not there that day to warn me!"

"Before retiring that night, for no reason at all I lifted the lid of the casket. The ring was gone. Everywhere I searched, every one I questioned—but no trace. At length, thinking it would turn up the next day, I dismissed the matter and fell asleep."

"At midnight—on the minute—I was awakened by a shriek of such penetrating horror as fairly froze my heart. I leaped from my bed fully standing. How long I stood, dazed and stone still, I do not know; but at length I was aware of old Giulietta in her night clothes, approaching me with blanched and working countenance. Her eyelids

were contracted in unspeakable terror; she contorted her stiffened lips in an effort to speak, but no sound came. Then, with a whimper like that of a terrified child, she toppled over at my feet.

"By this time the corridor was a tumult of chattering servants and fluttering lights, and I recovered my wits enough to wonder why my husband did not appear. Suddenly it dawned upon me that the scream might have come from his rooms, so thither I flew. His bed-chamber was empty, his bed untouched.

"I rushed out again into the dim corridor—and now I thought I understood what had given *Giulietta* her fright. Coming slowly along the further end of the long hall were five fantastic shapes. Four of them were carrying something on a litter, swathed in a white sheet. In a moment I saw that they were our serving men, half clad, as though just aroused from their beds. Oh, God, what a moment! The other servants that had gathered were huddled in tragic groups, some holding lights, some sobbing, some quaking with fear, all far in the background. None came near me, and I seemed powerless to move.

"Now I became conscious of the fifth figure. It was a woman, crazed, or so it seemed, her long black hair wildly streaming and her white robe blotched and stained a sickening crimson. She was weaving about, now moaning over the prostrate body, and again waving aloft a ring—it was my turquoise. My soul congealed with nameless horror. All my flesh puckered until the creeping chills fairly vibrated my body. It was *Jocosa*—*Jocosa*, my pretty little body-maid—frenzied, blood-stained, cursing my turquoise as the author of this woe.

"This woe! What woe? A hot iron seared my brain; I felt a flash of consuming heat; then I could think once more. I fixed my eyes on the litter, and every sound seemed hushed. A red speck appeared on the upper left side of the sheeted form. Under the sickly light of the flickering candles it slowly spread, sinister and red, until a fatal spot as large as my palm stood out upon the pallid field.

"In an instant I knew. '*Luigi!*' I wailed, and would have torn aside the napkin that covered his face; but they stopped my hands, while old *Giulietta*, who had recovered from her swoon as best she might, drew me away. Ah, my poor *Luigi!*

"When at length my husband's body was laid upon his bed and a surgeon summoned, they said that he still breathed; and, later, that he had revived and was asking for me. What joy and fear were mingled for me then! But only for a short moment was I allowed to kiss his black curls, answer his feeble smile with an adoring look, and steal on tip-toe away. They told me that the stiletto thrust—for such it was—had been turned aside by a bone, and he might live!

"Just what had happened no one knew, but from *Giulietta* I wrung enough to set me guessing.

"'The Madonna knows, my lambkin,' she sobbed, 'thou dost force me to speak. I know only what I saw, and would believe not even that. It must be some devilish night-dream. Ah, if only thou hadst not parted with thy turquoise!'

"'Hush, thou silly thing, is not my lord recovering? And has not my ring been found by Jocosca? Did not I see it in the poor wench's hand——'

"'Jocosca! Accursed be that daughter of lies! Jocosca! It was she, my dearie, who charmed thy lord away from thee—she with thy *turkis* upon her hand.'

"'Charmed my lord away!' What new hell was yawning to engulf my joy!

"'Aye, now 't is out—that was what I saw;' and the faithful old soul towered in a frenzy of wrath as she told me all.

"'Did not I, being as my lady knows a light sleeper, hear thy door softly open and close? Well, my hearing has ever been over-keen——'

"'Go—on—Giulietta!'

"'Aye, my lambkin—my old bones told me that something was amiss and so I looked into the great corridor. There stood that imp of sin, Jocosca, wrapped in thy white garden cloak, and wearing boldly thy turquoise ring. I saw it plainly in the moon-glow through the casement. She moved along the corridor as silently as evil-doers will, past the landing of the grand stair-case, and so she went on—oh, my baby, that I should live to see thee so dishonored!'

"'Giulietta! Say on,' I panted.

"'On—on toward my lord's apartments. Just then thy Count came alone, and quietly, up the grand stair-case. Seeing Jocosca, he stopped short, but in a moment made swiftly after her. Once, seeming to hear footsteps, she looked behind her, and then hurried the faster. Where-upon my lord also quickened his pace. Suddenly Jocosca began to run, my lord following with equal speed, and I silently after them both, keeping always to the shadows. In a moment the wanton had turned the corner into the east wing, and just as I rounded it after them both she pressed the spring in the secret door—of which I thought no one but thy ladyship and us old servants knew aught. For an instant she stood in the open doorway, masked, as I could then see, and smiling at my lord, her finger that wore the turquoise ring raised to her wicked lips, the hussy!

"'Then my lord leaped swiftly forward, and, crying out something I could not rightly hear, clasped her in his arms. Whether they slipped down the first step in the secret stairway I could not say, my lady, but they both reeled, and Jocosca shrieked as though all the fiends of hell were after her. Then the door flew violently shut. So much I saw, my lambkin, and may Saint Sebastian pierce the wicked wench with a

thousand arrows for stealing thy turquoise and thy husband, all in one evil night!' And old Giulietta began to weep.

"I could not say one word, my friend. Not far away, on his bed, lay my Luigi, nigh unto death, stabbed by whom I knew not; and here I, done to death by the faithful words of my old nurse.

"I was roused from my dazed despair by a sound of sobbing. Giulietta lumbered to the door. There lay Jocosa, beating her forehead upon the threshold, hoarse gasping sobs racking her body, while she tore her hair in abandonment. She still wore the tattered fragments of my white garden cloak, splashed with the bloody stain, which seemed in the dimly lighted corridor to glow angrily. It sent a fierce pang to my breast when I reflected whose blood it was that formed that unholy badge.

"Then a sudden wave of pity surged up. After all, what had this silly creature done, she who had always been so pink and piquante—too pretty for a lady's maid? Did not the fault lie rather with him?—but I crushed down my disloyal thought and strove to hold judgment in even balance.

"When Jocosa saw me she grovelled at my chair, flinging herself at my feet. 'Have mercy, my lady,' she begged in choking sobs. 'It was not I, indeed it was not! Oh, I would die for him, rather; for I love him so—Mary in heaven forgive me, but I love him so—and never so much as one look from my lord for such as I;' and she rocked herself to-and-fro in a tempest of despair.

"I was ashamed to feel the glow of joy that flamed in my bosom at the sound of those words—'never so much as one look from my lord for such as I.' Alas, that I should have doubted him! My heart that had seemed of stone was indeed of flesh.

"By degrees I drew from the wretched maid the truth—how that she had loved my lord, as a common daisy may love the glorious sun, and he both unconscious and uncaring; how that she had stolen my turquoise ring in the hope that it might charm to her the love of the Count; and how that, awaiting the hour of his return, she had tricked herself out in my garments to simulate my appearance, thinking so to gain his eye. The secret stairway had been but the thought of an instant, and when, crying, 'My wife, what dost thou here!' my Luigi had rushed upon her, in terror she had shrieked and swooned in his arms."

The Contessa paused, a soft light on her brow, a limpid moisture in her eye.

"And the dear Count grew rapidly well," she finished, "so that in two days he drank a cup in honor of my birthday—and kissed the turquoise upon his lady's hand."

"And the stiletto?" I ventured after a while, more in love with the sweet Contessa than ever.

"Yes, the stiletto," she echoed. "That was Francesco's, at that time our *major domo*. He was wildly in love with Jocosa, you see, but she would always flout him. And when he, returning from the grooms' chambers that night, saw my lord emerging into the courtyard from the secret stairway—for the upper door had blown shut and the Count must needs carry the unconscious Jocosa down the stairs—Francesca thought some baseness was meditated toward his love, and so his hot Calabrian blood ran riot—and then the stiletto!

"But, my friend, 'all's well'—you know the rest." Her eyes looked out far beyond the distant Arno, a silver strand beneath a silver moon. "No, I am not superstitious, but now you know why I have never again parted with my turquoise—and why what you ask can never be."

We were both silent for a little while.

"It is now five years since my Luigi went the long journey. And—now as always—our love is constant—and fortunate, even though he waits for me among the unseen." The Contessa paused again. And then—

"After all, do you Americans love like ^{we} ~~we~~ Italians? I wonder." But I—I did not wonder. I knew.



A FAREWELL

BY CHARLES L. O'DONNELL

FORGET me, and remember me, O heart!
 Forget me for the dear delight of days
 We walked together down fair, fragrant ways;
 Remember me for that I now depart.

For that I give our one sure hour of bliss
 In barter for the distant promised peace,
 Leave joy, for hope that joy may ne'er decrease—
 Reluctant heart, forget me not for this.

So may we, when no vesture of the clod
 Between our spirits makes the need of bars,
 Together watch the gold beads of the stars
 Slip through the fingers of our patient God.

THE JANUARY GENERALS

By La Salle Corbell Pickett

JANUARY is an appropriate month for the birth of great soldiers. It looks backward at the long and bloody way whereon the world has travelled so far toward civilization and forward to the coming struggles for yet higher conquests. Its god kept his gate closed in time of peace, and when war flashed a fiery torch across the world he threw open his portal and came forth to lead armies to battle.

The god of January presided over the beginnings of things. So the January warrior might be always expected at the forefront, possessed of a faculty for keeping ahead of competitors. The confidence of the followers of two of our January Generals is illustrated in the story of a captive Southern soldier who chanced to see General Grant hastening by.

"General, where are you going?" asked the Confederate.

"To Petersburg, I think," was the reply; "but maybe to heaven or hell."

"Well, I tell you, General," replied the soldier, "Bob Lee's at Petersburg and Stonewall Jackson's in heaven. I guess hell's the only place left for you."

That Grant appreciated the grim assignment was indicated by the smile of amusement on his face as he went on.

January 19, 1907, is the centennial anniversary of the birth of Robert Edward Lee. Stratford on the Potomac, a royal gift to a distinguished colonial Lee, had sheltered many a famous soldier, but never one who shed greater lustre upon the history of arms or more deeply and truly lived up to the higher motives of manhood than did Robert Edward Lee, destined to become the greatest leader in the mightiest war of the century. His father, "Light-Horse Harry," said that the military hero was the most useless member of the human race "except when the safety of a nation demands his saving arm." It remained for the son of that dashing horseman to show the world that a military hero, though weary with fruitless toil, crushed with defeat, surrounded by a poverty-stricken country, may be among the most useful members of the race and far greater than any mere follower of war, however successful.

Not only did the god Janus select the boy for his own and point out

before him the crimson way. The blood of a race of warriors had flowed through many generations into his veins. Lancelot Lee helped the Norman Conqueror to win his kingdom. Lionel Lee followed the Lion-Hearted Richard to the Holy Land. The father of Robert Edward Lee, finding the early politics of this country no more suited to his taste than many a later statesman has found those of his own days, had retired to the seclusion of Stratford to talk and write of past glories of warfare when he had led the cavalry of Washington's army. The first atmosphere which the new-born infant breathed was thunderous with guns, brilliant with sword flashes, glowing with crimson splashes in the sun.

Nor was the external atmosphere which surrounded the young soul less adapted to fill his veins with martial fire. The flames that had long been blazing in foreign lands were beginning to scorch the Atlantic shores. The echo of the guns that presaged the second war with England broke upon the infant ears while the young mind was too unused to the world's noises to discriminate between sounds.

It has been said that soldiers, like poets, are born, not made. How could a soldier better be born than in the month of January, in the County of Westmoreland, famed for the prowess of her sons, in the family of Light-Horse Harry and while hostile guns were trained upon his country?

"Fame, in arms or art, is naught unless betrothed to virtue," wrote Light-Horse Harry to one of his sons. The wonderful force of the union of fame and virtue has never been more happily exemplified than in the life of the January soldier whose century is just completed. By his fame was he known to the world, but it was something higher and deeper than fame which led an imprisoned soldier of the Confederacy just after the surrender to write to his old Commander: "The boys want you to get us out if you can. But if you can't, just ride by the Libby and let us see you and give you a good cheer."

The soldiers of the North knew his fame, but they were not thinking of that when a detachment of them passing his window waved their swords in salute, lifted their caps, and joined their voices lustily in a tribute to the man no less than to the warrior.



On January 21, 1824, another great soldier was born to Virginia and to the South. No royal gifts had secured to him a noble domain on which to look as his own when his eyes first opened to the world. Misfortune had come to his family, and the external glories of life had so narrowed for them that it is likely that fame was the last gift to which they could possibly have aspired for the life just dawning. But

the embryo soldier was of good fighting stock and strong puritan force, and he had wondrous power within himself. Perhaps the most courageous deed of all his brave life was the journey of eighteen miles which he made at the age of eight years on foot and alone over the mountains in search of independence. The same spirit some years later led him, with scant preparation and little money, to seek entrance to West Point, with the certainty of his ability to climb over all the difficulties which lay in his way.

Tom Jackson, as he was then known, must have been plentifully endowed with the vigor of his bracing, wintry birth-month, for he never let go of a thing which he had once grasped and never failed to surmount obstacles.

He seemed to have inherited the ruggedness of January, being capable of such absorption in the important affair of the moment as enabled him to set aside extraneous matters and proceed with the work at hand regardless of his own position. Sometimes this habit brought confusion to others, but it was all a matter of course to Stonewall. A colonel marching his regiment in the early morning under orders from General Jackson came upon a plain-looking man wearing a small cap and mounted upon a pony. Soon after daybreak the stranger suggested that the colonel halt his men for breakfast. "I will before long," said the colonel. Later the unknown man repeated the suggestion and received the same reply. After some time he said to the officer, "Colonel, halt your men for breakfast." The colonel thought he was a countryman who was sorry for the men and he decided to gratify him. When they started on again the stranger observed that the men were straggling, and the colonel gave the command to "short-step." "No," interposed the unknown; "that will throw them out of line. It should be slow-step." As the men did not know the step, he dismounted, took the head of the column, and showed them how to march. The colonel asked his adjutant who the stranger was and to his dismay received the reply: "Stonewall Jackson." The General was on foot so near the enemy that the battle was on in half an hour and was teaching the men how to march.

Having been so enterprising in the choice of a natal month, Stonewall continued to keep ahead. He could even circumvent the interviewing reporter. When some English correspondents in company with Wolseley called upon him and attempted to interview him he engaged them in animated conversation about their own country, asking so many questions and showing such wide information upon the subject that they had no opportunity to ask him anything. It is apparent that if the January General had chosen to go into the diplomatic instead of the military service he would have attained equal success in that slippery field.

The belief of the men in the ability of their January General to arrive on time was illustrated by a conversation between two Confederates in a Northern prison when the news of the great warrior's death came to them. "Do you know how Stonewall got to heaven?" "No." "Well, when the news of his being killed was carried up to heaven two angels were sent to escort him up. They went to our army and looked around the field of battle and about headquarters and could n't find him. They went over to the Feds and looked for him there and still could n't find him. After searching all day they gave it up and went back to heaven, where they found that he had flanked them and got there without their knowing it."

The god Janus had given to his favorite son the capacity for appreciating soldierly qualities in an enemy as well as in a friend. At the battle of Antietam one of Stonewall's men was about to fire upon a young soldier on the other side of the creek. Jackson said: "Stop! Lower your gun. I have watched that boy all day. He is too brave to be killed." Thus was William McKinley, at seventeen years of age, saved to become twice President of the United States and die by the assassin's bullet.

Jackson was not content with following Janus; he must find every opportunity to be in front. Upon one occasion he asked General Taliaferro to go with him to overlook the artillery fire. While watching the shots fall among the enemy, now and then exclaiming, "Good, good!" he asked General Taliaferro if he had a family. The General replied that he had a wife and five children, adding, "and if we stay here there will be a widow and five children." "Good, good," said Jackson, and they galloped away. General Taliaferro said afterward, "I have no doubt that Stonewall's life was saved that day by his sympathy for my children."

Some one said that the Lord had made up his mind that the South should not win, and to prevent it he had to remove Stonewall Jackson. Surely the storms of his natal month hurled themselves against the Confederacy from the day of his tragic death to the end.



I think General Pickett must have inherited all the varied moods and phases of the changeful and glittering month of Janus. General Jeb Stuart, pointing to General Pickett at a dance in the Yellow Tavern, said:

"When I see Pickett dance I think he ought to have been a dancing master. When I hear him whistle I think he ought to have been a bird. When I hear him sing I think he ought to have been a great tenor. When I see him ride I think he ought to have been a leader of cavalry."

When I see him in the drawing-room I think he should have been a court gentleman in the days of chivalry. When I see him lead a charge I think he should spend his life on the battlefield. Pickett can do everything."

With the battle storm of his nativity, he had also been endowed with the sunniness of the balmy days which sometimes bring their glow and beauty into the rigorous month. There was no room in his nature for hatred or anger. He never forgot the admonition which Lincoln had given him when at West Point about the "drop of honey," and he kept the sweetness always in his heart. It made his own life gentle and bright and put sunshine into the lives of all around him. It won the heart of the little child and inspired the rugged man with an impulse to follow him to the gates of death. Pickett was one of the Generals of whom it may truthfully be said that their men followed them. He never pointed out a path in which he was not ready to go. He did not send his men into battle; he led them there.

I am reminded here of a meeting with an old Federal soldier in 1898 at the Peace Jubilee in Philadelphia. On being introduced to me the veteran said: "I read in the paper that you were here, and I came because I wanted to see you." We entered into pleasant conversation, in the course of which he told me this incident:

"I could have killed General Pickett at the battle of Gettysburg. I saw a man on horseback not far from the stone wall, with the bullets falling thick around him. He sat there watching the field as coolly as if he had been on a quiet road enjoying the scenery. I took aim, thinking how easy it would be to shoot him down. Then the feeling came to me that I could not kill a man like that. So I lowered my gun and turned back. Behind me were three men in the act of lowering their guns. 'We can't shoot a man as brave as that,' they said. I did not know then who the officer was, but afterward learned that he was General Pickett."

"I was praying for him every minute," I said. "I thank God that bravery or prayer, whichever it was, stayed your hand."

The cheerfulness of the General's nature was evident in the musical whistle with which he uplifted the hearts of his men on the weary march through rain and mud or under the pouring rays of the mid-summer sun. It was a bugle call to the charge upon the hostile ranks of fatigue, discouragement, starvation, and all the miseries with which his men were forced to contend, and they never failed to respond to it manfully and bravely. This musical habit of his might have caused him to fall under the ban of "Stonewall," who, hearing some of his college company whistling in the adjutant's office, put in his head and called: "Young gentlemen, when I want any whistling at these headquarters I will have a special detail made for the purpose."

"Boys, give them a cheer!" General Pickett called out as Armistead with his glorious band rushed up the slope of Cemetery Ridge. The cheer was given with a right good will, and perhaps the scroll that marks the spot where Armistead fell beside the guns stands farther within the old Federal line because of the uplift of that ringing response. A few moments later the leader who had cheered his men on to the last supreme effort was walking down the slope beside the stretcher on which lay his wounded Brigadier, Kemper, protecting him from the scorching rays of the sun and doing all in his power to allay his suffering and strengthen his spirit.

As he left the field a tall, lank private of the Twenty-fourth Virginia sprang up and said: "General, let's go it again!" But the General knew that the battle was over, and the gallant proposal of the young Virginian was not favorably considered.

After Gettysburg the General rode home, cloaked with the glory and the gloom of the world's greatest battle. Along the way men and women and little children came out to meet him and cover his horse with flowers. The air was rent with cheers as he went on his way. He had been the central figure of a scene so grand that it needed not victory to crown it with glory, and the whole South did him honor.

The next day, as we went to church in Richmond, we saw a little Jewish boy crying. "What is the matter, my little man?" asked the General. The child explained that his shoes hurt his feet so that he could not walk. He said that they made him feel as if he were walking on burning coals. He was a dirty little rascal, and his plaintive condition did not add to his charms. There was nothing attractive about him but his youth and his misfortunes. Either alone would have been effective with the General. Taking the child in his arms, he asked him where he lived and carried him to his home. Having delivered him safely to his natural protectors, he proceeded on his way with the pleasing consciousness of having "done it to one of the least of these."

So thoroughly was Pickett's heart filled with the bracing sunshine of the brightest January days that after having galloped through a rain of fire and balls to his command at Five Forks he rode through the lines with the men falling upon all sides, waving a battle-flag that he had caught from the hand of a fallen color-bearer, and joined his men in singing, "Rally 'round the flag, boys."

The January Generals have passed beyond earth's warfare, but their memory has made the brave old month one of glorious renown, and the varying phases of its wintry days bring back to us remembrances of the valiant three, so different in their characteristics, yet united in one cause by ties stronger than life or death.

THE GIRL WHO FORGOT

By Eleanor Mercein Kelly

A BISHOP is more amusing to chase than a delivery-boy, I think, because he is fat, and puffs and wabbles so absurdly. Ours is undoubtedly the reincarnation of a pug mother used to have when pugs were in fashion. He has the same disposition, and figure, and appetite, and the same all-soul expression of the eye when he gazes at mother. I did not expect to hurt him much—I never do when I start—but callers and even delivery-boys are getting scarce, and I do so love to see people run. Everybody leaves parcels and messages with Wilhelm at the garden gate now, and life is very dull.

That afternoon I found the Bishop proposing to mother again, and also, as usual, talking about me. I listened behind a portière.

"You still refuse to think of putting her into this excellent private establishment, where she would have expert care, leaving you free to live again?" said the Bishop.

"She is just my little baby girl again," said mother. "How could I give her away to strangers?"

"Ha—a dangerous baby girl!" muttered the Bishop. "Get a sane woman companion here, at least, or you'll be going mad yourself."

"Women will not stay. It makes them nervous. You know I've always been rather a man's woman, any way, Charles," smiled mother.

The Bishop got to his feet, and puffed round the room excitedly. I quite expected him to bark.

"Oh, what a life!" he cried. "What a waste of your beauty, of your charm, of your great heart and brain! Just the keeper of a lunatic."

"Just the mother of a grown-up child," she answered. "Charles, if I have beauty and charm and heart and brain, thank God for me. I need them all. But Helen is not to be feared so long as I carry this, you know"—touching the yellow fan—"and as for women, men servants are far more satisfactory. My cook is quite wonderful, don't you think?"

"That is what I find so hard to bear—your calmness," said the Bishop wretchedly. "Can't you possibly have me, Alice? It is my calling to help carry burdens, and think how dear this one would be to me! All these years of loving you—are they to bring me nothing,

not even the joy of service? I know I'm a fat, ugly old man now, but I can diet. My heart does n't seem to have grown fat and ugly."

I peered from the portière, laughing. But tears were rolling down mother's cheeks.

"Nor your soul," she said softly, laying her slim hand on his pudgy purple one as if she liked to touch it. "Thank you, no, Charles. This is a burden I cannot share, even with you."

The Bishop blew his nose. "At least, it won't be long now," he said after awhile. "Acute dementia kills—thank God!"

I slipped out into the garden to wait, picking up a nice sharp sickle from the grass as I passed. The Bishop deserved something for making mother cry. I will not have her sad. I want her to be waiting in Heaven for me just as she is, always smiling and gay, with her pretty frocks, and the new white hair that is so beautiful a contrast to her blue, blue eyes. I often ask her how she keeps so cheerful in this tiresome, stupid world, and she says it is because of me. That is fortunate, for sad people are bad for lunatics, I have heard the doctor tell her. And she must surely be in Heaven before I get there, for strangers are bad for lunatics, too. Well, I have killed the old collie, so at least one friend will be waiting for me. And I shall kill mother the first time I find her without the yellow fan. Dear mother!

She came to the door with the Bishop. "You will not need me, I think," she said. "You are not afraid of my Helen? The gardener will take you to the gate."

I chuckled. Old Wilhelm as a body-guard! Whenever I come near him, he seizes a rake or a hoe and begins to tremble. I met them on the path. The Bishop started slightly, but took my hand.

"How beautiful you are, and how like your mother!" he said huskily. "But you look a little pale. Are you quite well?"

I smiled sweetly, and murmured, "Acute dementia kills, thank God."

The Bishop dropped my hand, and edged down the path toward Wilhelm. "Your mother wants you at the house, my child," he said.

I pretended to believe him, but when his back was turned I let out a whoop—lunatics are supposed to whoop, you know—and started after him with the sickle.

"Acute dementia kills little Bishops," I added.

"Ach, make *schnell*, sir—she excites herself!" cried Wilhelm.

It was surprising to see how fast their legs twinkled down the path, the Bishop's well ahead. He would not wait for the gate to be unlocked, but shinnied up Wilhelm and clambered from his shoulders over the wall. Such a nimble old cleric! I was out of breath myself, or I should have followed him over.

"*Ach*, Miss Helen, naughty, naughty!" gasped Wilhelm, keeping a firm hold on his trusty rake. "Think shame how you the mamma's Bishop treat!"

"You should not exercise so violently. You are quite purple," I said. "Will the Bishop be coming soon again, do you think?"

"Not so!" replied Wilhelm, with conviction. What a pity! I really ought to have caught him. Perhaps the next time I shall not have a sickle.

Presently there came the moon. It seemed to call me through the garden and the wood and beyond, seeking something—I have forgotten what. And there is no beyond, only a high wall at the end of every path. When I try to remember what I am looking for, the headache comes. That means the yellow fan presently—a horrid thing of plumes that wave slowly to and fro across my face, with a great shadow following, following, upon the wall. I want to scream, to run about, to break things; but when the plumes begin to wave I have to lie rigid, watching them come and go. And beyond the plumes I see mother's quiet blue eyes, and hear her voice saying, "Careful, careful, dear. Go to sleep."

In the moonlight I sing, to amuse the people who listen on the outside of the wall. I hear them whispering there, and when I cry "Boo!" they run. So I know they are real, and not the other people who follow me everywhere, wailing and laughing and not to be frightened away. That night a sweet French song came to my mind, the kind of song that makes one pleasantly sad. "*Ohé, Robert, ohé,*" it goes. And a soft voice answered over the wall, "*Ohé, Hélène, ohé!*"

My heart beat very fast. A young man swung himself down to me, so handsome and eager that I held out my arms to him in delight.

"You know me—you know me at last," he whispered, straining me close. "Oh, Helen, Helen! Was it a surprise they were keeping until to-morrow—our own day? But I have waited so long! They should have sent for me instantly. . . . Every week your dear mother has begged me to wait a little longer, for fear of the shock. I knew, I *knew*, it would be all right as soon as you saw me again. Love is better than medicine—she has forgotten that. . . . I used to follow you on the other side of the wall, just to hear your voice. Such queer, crazy little songs, darling, and children from the village listening fearfully and daring each other to call to you. Oh, it was cruel, heart-breaking! But to-night when you sang our own song so tenderly, I knew that the wall would never be between us again."

He kissed me very often. It was pleasant.

"They tell me your mind has been a perfect blank," he said presently. "What is the last thing you remember, dearest?"

"The yellow fan," I whispered, shuddering.

"Your mother was putting you to sleep with it when they made me leave you that night," he said. "That dreadful night! The delirium came very suddenly. I held you down in the bed till my strength was nearly gone—you had a knife. Then they heard me and broke in the door, and your mother laid her hand on your eyes and began to fan you with that great yellow fan, saying quietly, 'Control yourself, dear—control yourself.' I shall never forget it. One doctor thought the hypnotic movement of the fan quieted you, but I believe it was nothing except her strong will calling your poor sick mind back to sentry duty. . . . Oh, it has been so long, my wife! Do you know"—his arms tightened around me—"I had to go away from you because you wanted to kill me? It was brain-fever, of course, and the fool doctors feared insanity. Thank God they were wrong, and it's all over!"

"It is you I have been looking for whenever the moon called," I told him.

For a long time he talked to me about the things I have forgotten—our wedding, and journeys, and a baby that never came. I smoothed his hair and his face, and smiled at him, for he was more beautiful even than mother. The sickle lay beside me, and sometimes I felt its edge to be sure it was sharp enough. Dull knives hurt. I killed old Rover so nicely that he wagged his tail until the very last.

"The mound we're sitting on is Rover, you know," I mentioned presently.

"Why, the poor old fellow!" cried Robert. "I am sorry he died, though I was always a little jealous of him because you loved him so."

"I killed him because I thought he ought to be in Heaven when I get there," I explained. "And I killed the canaries, too, and tried to kill old Nurse, but she got away."

"Helen!" said my husband hoarsely. He took me by the shoulders and looked deep into my eyes. I laughed and nodded at him. His lips went gray, and he hid his face in his hands. I kissed his hair, and his fingers, and tried in every way I could to make him nice again.

"Don't be sad, beautiful man," I whispered. "Sad people are not good for lunatics. If you don't want to be dead, you shall climb back over the wall. But you would n't have long to wait," I coaxed, "and I want you more than anybody to be in Heaven when I come." I showed him the sickle. "See how nice and sharp it is," I said. "Do you care so very much to live?"

"No—my God, no!" he cried. "Kiss me, Helen."

And while I kissed him I ran the sickle quickly over each wrist. It is horrid to see the blood spurt out regularly as a clock ticks, so I put my hands over his eyes. He settled against me heavily, whispering, "Sing, dearest, sing now." I sang, "Ohé, Robert, ohé," until his

body was limp in my arms and I knew he could not hear any longer. I sang so beautifully that the people on the other side of the wall applauded.

Presently mother found us.

She sat beside my bed a long time before the fan put me to sleep. Very often she wiped dampness from her forehead, though the night seemed cool and pleasant to me.

"Do you love me, mother?" I murmured once.

"You are just my little baby girl," she answered.

"And you're always happy because of me, are n't you?" I asked.

"Go to sleep, dear," she whispered, laying across my eyes a hand that shook.

But I pushed it away, and looked at her.

"Your voice is tired," I said. "It's such a stupid world, with walls at the end of every path. Dying is very easy. Put away the fan, mother—put away the fan!"

Her eyes closed under mine, and the fan stopped waving. I thought the moment had come at last. My hands are strong, and her throat so soft and slender. One grip—

But the fan began to move again, slowly, steadily, and mother said her prayers aloud. She got as far as "Lead us not into temptation," and she repeated that over and over.



IF THE FARING FORTH WROUGHT ALL

BY MARY BYERLEY

A LITTLE of life, a little of love,
A little of joy,—little worlds to move,—
And the day is over.

A glint of the heaven that might shine through,
A little of life—so little of you
That the mountains rise and the mists renew
When the day is over.

Ah, Sweet, if the faring forth wrought all,
With the heart and breath of me ever athrall
To your beauty, Love's lover,—
Then 't were to laugh in broad, glad day,
And round up the stars, and live, I say!
For oh, if the faring forth wrought all
Day ne'er would be over!

THE LAST GREAT BIOGRAPHY

WHISTLER PERSONIFIED BY JOSEPH AND
ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL

By Harrison S. Morris

IF Whistler is revisiting the glimpses of the moon, whose terrestrial effects he did so much to caress into artistic permanence, he must be chuckling with his old glee over the masterly biography which his dear friends—almost his only loyal friends to the end—Joseph and Elizabeth Robins Pennell, have just produced.

Here is, indeed, matter for delight—and perhaps revenge—to those whom the Master called “the rare few who early in life have rid themselves of the friendship of the many”—who have understood and quietly applauded, even taken contumely for their adherence,—the exclusive remnant that were steadfast in admiration of maligned genius true to beauty struggling to free a world that trampled it in the mud.

Two volumes bound in the symphony of Gold and Gray that Whistler designed for the “Gentle Art of Making Enemies”; rich in mechanical devices and opulent in pictures, hold as consummate a piece of constructive biography, as complete an embodiment of a varied and memorable character, as ever was rendered into English.

Whistler, in spite of the radiance of the lime-light, was a man of mystery. This, indeed, contributed to his celebrity. He appeared in London and startled the insular conservatives with his astonishing canvases. Where did he come from? Who was he? Why was he there? Nobody knew about his antecedents, nobody could answer. And his fellow countrymen could do little more. He testified in the Ruskin trial that he was born in St. Petersburg; he was claimed by Baltimore; Lowell, Massachusetts, was his birthplace. Like Homer, he made cities notable that even assumed his nativity; like Shakespeare, his nonage and youth were hidden.

These biographers, with exhaustless energy and intelligence that seems inspired, have run down the clues, found every living witness, made the camera do its utmost, and have opened vistas that might have been forever closed by the passage of a few more years. Houses

would have vanished, the memories of old friends would have faded; the Whistler of mystery would have endured; the misrepresentation and bitterness would have had no answer.

James Abbott McNeill Whistler is one of the everlasting names in the art of the world. As he once said to William M. Chase: "I'm not arguing; I'm telling you." It is not any longer a matter of opinion; it is a matter of fact; and the remarkable circumstances about it is that it has taken only thirty years to convince a world affronted and incensed at his art that its judgment was blindly wrong. He is an enduring witness of beauty, and our level of culture and of ideals has been forever lifted by his existence.

Hence the value of such a record—no perfunctory biography, but a living, organic realization of character, with its spots of tarnish and spots of brightness, its failings and successes, its kinks and whims and vanities just as in life they were. Here was a marked man, a personage in any age, bringing the fundamentals of art which Japan discovered and Velasquez perfected from those remoter days to our own thresholds. Every item of his personality is precious, every idiosyncrasy lends illumination to his achievements. When our far-off descendants stand in front of the "Mother," in the Louvre of that day, as we stand to-day before the treasures of the Prado, will it not be a deep satisfaction that the painter still lives in this admirable and authentic embodiment?

The Whistler thus portrayed was a two-sided person of outwardly wayward habits and inwardly keen and reflective character. Evidences of both qualities are abundantly given in every chapter, and the mingling of romance and drollery, prophetic taste, combativeness and sayings that cut like a knife, with sympathies that rushed to the aid of distress and knowledge that was deep and sure, makes reading that fastens you the page and which it is impossible to forget.

What, for instance, could be apter as a cradle for the man of destiny than the career of Whistler's father. He was a West Point graduate, who built some of our earliest railroads and was suddenly landed by the tide of progress in St. Petersburg. He built the first line in Russia and met everybody from the Czar down. His family learned Russian ways, and little Jimmy had his first drawing lessons in the Academy of Fine Arts on the Neva. Remote, indeed, from the Lowell and Stonington homes of austere angles and the society of his orthodox maternal relations. Then his sister, with romantic fitness, married the young physician, Seymour Haden, destined to become one of England's most distinguished etchers. Whistler drifted to Paris, and his life there was that of Murger's "Bohème," full of color, incident, adventure. His friends, his models, his art, are sources of endless delight, screaming farce, or overflowing wit. There is hardly

anything he did at this period which is not full of delicious fun and extravagant buffoonery. And yet he was laying the foundation of his maturer talent, and even through the glamour of his wayward, careless existence, there are spots of solid thinking and well directed energy. After a while the scene shifts to London, and the practical jokes become passages of wit and droll stories. These, every reader of the biography will look for, and he will not be disappointed. The measure is full and running over, new stories told as if by phonograph, with the familiar accent and the irritating laugh. What could better render the butterfly spirit than this, showing how he had hung the pictures in the Liverpool Exhibition of 1891:

You know the Academy baby by the dozens had been sent in and I got them all in my gallery—and in the centre, at one end, I placed the birth of the baby—splendid—and opposite, the baby with the mustard pot, and opposite that the baby with the puppy—and in the centre, on one side, the baby ill, doctor holding pulse, mother weeping. On the other side, by the door, the baby dead—the baby's funeral—baby from the cradle to the grave—baby in heaven—babies of all kinds and shapes all along the line, not crowded, you know, hung with proper respect for the baby. And on varnishing day, in came the artists—each making for his own baby—amazing! his baby on the line—nothing could be better! And they all shook my hand, and thanked me—and went to look—at the other men's babies—and then they saw babies in front of them, babies behind them, babies to right of them, babies to left of them. And then—you know—their faces fell—they did n't seem to like it—and—well—ha! ha! they never asked me to hang the pictures again at Liverpool! What!

And how droll is the little dinner to the solemn buyer, who had to be tolerated as a matter of business:

Mr. Freer felt it necessary to entertain the party, which he did by talking pictures, like a "new critic," and Japanese prints like a cultured schoolma'am. Whistler slept peacefully through it all, and we tried to be attentive, until at length, at some psychological moment in Hiroshige's life or in Mr. Freer's collection, Whistler snored such a tremendous snore that he woke himself up, crying: "Good Heavens! who is snoring?"

Light and shade follow each other over the pages in startling succession, and many emotions are excited by the vicissitudes of a career so comic, so noble; but through it all the dapper and delightful little Butterfly flutters in the security of a spirit that knows and loves beauty and that has found the touchstone of the elevated life: Taste.

Taste is probably the epitaph he himself would prefer. And by that hackneyed word, meaning perhaps the rarest quality in modern life, Whistler, of all others, seems unreservedly to be characterized.

THE HONOR OF THE CHAPTER

By J. R. Fisher

“O H-O-O-O! Jimmy Wallace!”

I looked up from my economics. The hail came from up-stairs, from the care-free top floor. I started from my chair. Inclination said, “Go and smoke a pipe with the gang;” but Duty, reinforced by my fear of the impending examinations, held me back. I wavered a moment, then the voice of Duty prevailed. I sank back into my chair, fixed my tired, rebellious eyes on the book, and once more tried to grasp the effect of immigration on the standard of living.

“Oh-o-o-o! Jimmy Wallace, come up here!”

Again I wavered. Inclination gained. A breath of warm intoxicating spring air blew through the window and turned the scale. “I really might as well see what they want,” I thought. “I’ll study all the better for a little rest.” Inclination galloped home; Fear of the Finals a bad second; Sense of Duty left at the post. I picked up my favorite pipe and hurried up-stairs.

The gang was assembled in Fusser Parsons’s room, but that Mecca of the frivolous lacked its usual charm. A general air of desolation was all-pervading. One gas-jet flickered dimly on the lavishly decorated walls, where pennants, keepsakes, dance-cards, trophies, showing dimly in the half-light, intensified the gloom with their reminder of happier days gone by. Johnson, looking as if in him were centred all the sorrow of the universe, perched on the desk, hugging one knee; on the window-seat Kid Williams was dejectedly rolling a cigarette; and Parsons, his usually smiling face furrowed with dogged, unavailing thought, stood before the unlit grate, his hands deep in his trousers pockets. From the mantel behind him a row of young ladies’ photographs smiled frigidly down, each seeming to take a cynical enjoyment in the depression of her sometime worshiper. He greeted me abruptly: “Got any money, Jimmy?”

“Not to speak of,” I confessed. “But I’ll stand for the beer if that’ll do. What’s the matter? They can’t any more than flunk you. Go get us something, Kid! Here’s the widow’s mite;” and I tossed my last remaining half-dollar to Williams.

"Beer be hanged!" broke in Parsons. "But you might as well get some, Kid. It is n't the finals. We're in an awful hole. Lend me twenty dollars!"

I settled myself among the cushions in the big Morris chair and leisurely lit my pipe. "I'll wait till you wake up, Fusser," I answered, between puffs. "Would n't I be *likely* to have twenty dollars two weeks before class day? That half is the last real money I'll see until I sell my stuff to get out of town. Can't you raise anything on the Campus?"

My innocent question seemed to annoy Johnson—he threw a magazine at me. "College!" he snorted. "Why, I never met such a cheap crowd in my life. I've been up there all day, and there is n't a dollar-bill that is n't nailed fast. Oh, we've tried college, and it's no use."

"Well, then, pawn something," I ventured.

"Pawn what, you drooling jackass?" yelled Parsons. "Know any one who'll take old dance-cards as security? How much can you raise on two Ingersolls and a busted stop-watch? Pawn your dressing-gown, fat-head! If that's all you can think of, go back and grind. Besides, it's too late; we need it first thing in the morning. See here, Jimmy, have n't you *any* money?"

I went through my pockets methodically. "I seem to have just thirty-five cents, and I need that for car-fare—I'm going over to see Miss Warren off in the morning."

Parsons came across the room and sat on the arm of my chair. "That's just it, Jimmy, that's the trouble," he said, with intense seriousness. "I'm going over, too. We've simply got to send her flowers. We all come in on it. How are we going to raise the money?"

"We are n't. We can't do it," I said. "I've thought it all over. I'd like to send her something—she's been awfully good to me this winter—but I can't manage it. That settles it as far as I go."

"That's the first sensible word I've heard to-night," boomed a deep voice from the sofa, as Billy Brown rolled his six-foot-two body free from the fancy presentation cushions and sat up. "That's what I've said all along. We'd like to send her something, and we ought to, but we can't. We've done our best, so what's the use fuming? Wish the Kid would come back with that beer. You chumps can't see when you're beat, and when a chap talks sense to you you sit on him. She won't know the difference—she'll get lots of flowers."

Parsons jumped up and stamped across the room, kicking the litter of books, shoes, and papers out of his way. "Oh, you make me tired!" he snapped. "Of course she'll get lots of flowers—that's the very reason why we've got to send her some ourselves. Have n't you any fraternity pride? The Alpha Gamma crowd is sending her a peach. I was in Morton's to-day, trying to get him to trust me, and Billy Lea

blew in and ordered a box of American beauties sent to the ship. What do you think of that? Marion Warren's been our frat sister all winter, she came to both the dances, she poured at the reception, she's wearing my frat pin now, we've sponged on her for tea two or three times a week all spring. Now she's going to Europe, and the Alpha Gam bunch, that she's only known two weeks, are putting up for roses, while we are n't sending a thing. What's she going to think of us? That we're a lot of short skates! And we are, if we don't make good. It's a question of the honor of the chapter, and you fellows are laying down without half trying."

Brown pulled thoughtfully on his wheezy brier. "Well, why did n't you borrow from Billy Lea? The Alpha Gams seem to have money." He dodged, expecting battle to follow the suggestion—a show of prosperity to our rivals was the first article of our creed—but Parsons was too wrought up even to notice. Encouraged by his immunity, Brown went on: "You fellows have been talking rot all evening. Fraternity rivalry's all right in its place, and Marion Warren's a bully fine girl. No one would like to send her off in style better than I. I'd go over and see her off only I've an exam. She's a nice girl, and she's been pretty good to us, and she's a lot too good a sort to rate fellows by what they give her. Hurray! here comes the Kid with the beer!"

Kid Williams came in, loaded with cheese, rye bread, and an innocent looking kerosene can, dedicated to the carrying of intoxicants back in the days of puritanical dormitory blue-laws, before there was a chapter-house; and his coming scattered the gloom. Brown reached down the steins from the mantelpiece, I made sandwiches, and Johnson produced cigarettes from a cunningly hidden cache behind the book-case. Parsons alone refused to drown his sorrow. He did not join the circle round the table, but, with folded arms, leaned against the wall and scowled at us.

We all felt a bit nervous under the disdainful scrutiny of our acknowledged leader, I think, but with Billy Brown, heterodox though he was, filling the steins, flesh and blood refused to struggle longer with hopeless wearying subjects. After all, Brown was right. We had done our best—and we were very thirsty. What use to lament the inevitable? We drank the historic first toast with enthusiasm. "To the future of the Faculty!" we chorused. Each of us emptied his stein, banged it on the table, and pointed in a direction exactly opposite to the one where heaven is supposed to lie. Then we settled down and Johnson began to tune his mandolin. This was too much for the neglected chieftain. Disdaining even to glance at the stein we offered him, he stalked across the room to the door. There he turned and faced us.

"You fellows may forget the honor of the chapter," he said, "but I don't. I'll either show up with a decent send-off to-morrow or I won't be there at all. I'm going out now. Amuse yourselves all you want to."

We looked at each other a little ashamed. Down-stairs a door slammed. The Kid went to the window and watched him down the street. "I wonder what he means to do," he mused.

"Perhaps he's going to burgle the Alpha Gam house," suggested Brown. "Fusser's all right, but he takes life too seriously."

"Well, whatever he does, I bet he does it! He never falls down when he really tries," cried Johnson, with all the enthusiasm of a disciple. "Everybody in this!" He struck a chord and broke into a familiar tune.

We sang the Stein Song, or at least we tried to—its range hardly fits the untrained voices of American youth. The "good song" rang anything but "clear," and we were all relieved when Billy Brown, unaspiring and practical, took the mandolin. He played an air that we all knew, unknown to fame, uncertain of origin, but offering unequalled opportunities for what the college man considers "close harmony." It runs, as nearly as I can reproduce it, as follows:

"A-n-d I s-a-a-w the f-i-e-l-d-s of cot-ton, and f-a-a-c-e-s long f-o-r-got-ten;
I s-a-a-w my d-e-a-r-old Moth-er stand-ing by the cabin door.
A-n-d the e-e-v'ning bells were ring-ing, fond rec-olec-tion bring-ing,
I s-a-a-w it i-i-n the m-o-o-o-n light—long—l-o-n-g—a-go."

Thirsty from our exertion, we sought refreshment, but the can was empty. Brown tucked the pick away among the strings, yawned, looked at his watch. "Do you fellows know it's half past one? Guess I'll turn in. I've an exam."

"So've I. Do you know anything about History 1, Johnson?" asked the Kid anxiously.

Johnson stood up and stretched himself before answering, "Only that I'll never pass it. Neither will you. Denison always flunks freshmen on principle. This makes my third whack at it. I'll be with you in the morning, Kid. We'll go under together. Give my regards to Miss Warren, Jimmy. So long, every one," and the party broke up.

Stewards, officers, porters, parcel-laden tourists, were rushing to and fro in a mad, hurrying disorder; raucously tooting tug-boats all but drowned the undercurrent of explosive Platt-Deutsch objurgation: everything was confusion and excitement as I stood by the gang-plank saying good-by to Miss Warren.

This ceremony was not altogether as I had imagined it. In fancy we had stood apart from the crowd, somewhere in the bow of the ship, and I, resplendent in a new spring suit, had delivered in felicitous set-phrases the official farewell of the chapter; but though the reality with its hurried good-by, shared with half a dozen of her girl friends, was by no means so impressive a scene, I was far from sorry I had come. Never, it seemed to me, had she looked prettier than she did now in her natty sailor suit and tam-o'-shanter. I thought higher of Parsons's discernment. She was indeed a girl to break all the commandments for.

The gong had sounded, and she was giving us a last hurried handshake. She was wearing our fraternity pin—Fusser's pin. Lucky Fusser! My heart swelled with pride as I noticed it. But the pin was holding a rose. "One of Len's roses," I thought. "One of the Alpha Gams' roses," and the sight made my blood boil with the angry mortification of defeat. Up to the last moment I had put a blind desperate hope in Parsons. It was too late now. For once the infallible had failed.

Miss Warren held out both her hands to me. "Well, good-by, Mr. Wallace. Good luck in your finals. I'm awfully glad you came over. I was afraid the exams would keep all the boys away. Give my very best to all the chapter, and tell Mr. Parsons what I think of him for saying he'd be here and then not coming."

Here was my chance to sidetrack Alpha Gamma. I took it at a gulp. "He'll be mighty sorry," I said. "He left the house in plenty of time, but he was going to stop and get some flowers for you. That must have delayed him."

Miss Warren flushed. "How kind of him! I wish he had n't waited, though. I'd rather have seen him than get any number of flowers, but it was nice of him to think of it. You tell him the chapter sister is going to wear his pin all over Europe. Tell him—no, I'll send him a letter by the pilot. Oh, hurry, Mr. Wallace! They're going to take in the gang-plank!"

I ran quickly down to the dock. The plank was run in, the hawsers cast off, and, amid much waving of handkerchiefs, cheering, and tooting of whistles, the big ocean steamer began to back slowly out into the river. I waved my hat; Miss Warren waved her handkerchief. Suddenly I saw her start, turn, and point to the shore. I looked, but the river wall cut off my view. From her higher position she could look over it, and something beyond seemed to excite her immensely. She leaned over the rail and called to me. Above the din of the whistles I caught only one word: "Parsons!" Could it be Fusser she saw? I sprang clear of the crowd and looked back along the pier. No! It could n't be. Yes! Perhaps. There was a black patch against

the glaring sunlight of the entrance. I strained my eyes. It was a man running at top speed. He was a long way off, but coming nearer as fast as his frantically moving legs could carry him. I looked back at the ship. It was going out faster; only the tip of the bow now showed through the opening in the wall of the dock. Leaning over the extreme end of the railing, I saw Miss Warren, breathless, expectant. I looked back to the runner. Yes, Heaven be thanked! it was Parsons. His long tan rain-coat trailed out behind him in the air, one hand clutched his straw hat. In the other was a big oblong box. He had not failed. By some miracle he had got the roses. But would he make it? Perhaps. He was close to me now, I could see his drawn face blotched with exertion. Some one in the crowd grasped the situation and began to cheer. Now he was abreast of me. "To the end of the dock!" I yelled, and together we sped in a last grand sprint to the end of the pier. Parsons is our quarter-miler, but excitement lent me wings, and I beat him to the gateway. Just as I flashed into the sunlight I heard a shout behind me and spun around. His foot had struck a coil of rope, he was staggering, and, even as I looked, he fell with a crash. His hat flew into a pile of freight, but the precious box slid along the planks to my very feet. I snatched it up. The ship was far out now, but not for nothing had I trained for the hammer-throw. Grasping it firmly by one end, I whirled it twice around my head, then, with my arms extended, swung my whole body. Twice I pivoted, every muscle keyed to the utmost endeavor, and as I came round the third time I put every ounce of heave I possessed into my arms and launched the box like a projectile after the receding ship. Away it flew in a glorious parabola. It reached, and my yell of victory was echoed by the admiring crowd. I saw a steward pick it up, saw Miss Warren claim it and wave her handkerchief to me; then a heavy hand clutched my shoulder and, turning, I looked into Parsons's white, scared face.

"Run!" he gasped. There was fear in his eyes, and I obeyed without question. If we had run before, now we fairly flew. His breath was coming in quick gasps, and his head was sawing the air with exhaustion, but he led me furiously down the dock, across the yard, out into the street. On we tore, block after block. At last endurance could stand it no more; we shot through the gate of a beer garden and fell exhausted on a bench. I got my breath first.

"What's the matter?" I panted. "I got it on board all right."

"Yes, I know. That's it. We're ruined."

I stared at him dumfounded.

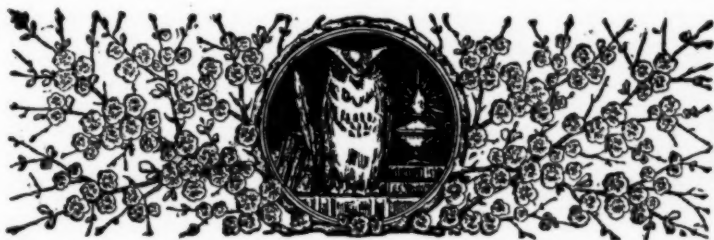
"It's all over now," he went on. "We'd better not tell the bunch." The words came slowly as he gasped for breath. "I could n't get any flowers. Tried to bluff it out. Hunted up one of the old boxes—the

ones the dance decorations came in. Waited half an hour for the ship to start. I meant to heave it short into the water, but my foot slipped."

"And I threw it on board!" I groaned. "What was in it, Fusser?"

"Nothing but some old newspapers and half a brick to make it sink. Let's go home."

We never have told the fellows. We never even speak of it to each other. But I think Miss Warren must have kept her word about writing with the pilot, for the next day Fusser Parsons was again wearing his fraternity pin.



BRAINS

By Thomas L. Masson

BRAINS are common to all parts of the country, and traces of them have even been discovered in summer in Lenox, Bar Harbor, and Newport. They are originally used to obtain money, but when money is obtained by them it usually takes their place.

The quality of brains varies in different localities. Mixed with ginger, they become very valuable. With a spine, they are a necessity in every household. At one time they influenced literature, but the discovery was made that literature could do without them. Since then they have been almost exclusively devoted to advertising.

Brains are employed in various enterprises. They make bridges, railroads, and other systems of transportation. They also create capital and are used extensively in evading the law. They mix with water and gasoline, but are absorbed by alcohol.

Brains are bought and sold in the open market. They may be traded in on the exchange, in Washington and Albany or in other political centres.

The best quality, however, are not traded in. Indeed, oftentimes they are not even heard of until long after they have passed away.

THE WOMAN WHO HAD NO NEEDS

AN EMOTIONAL MONOTONE

By Jane Belfield

HE was so very sorry for everybody's troubles that he walked through his own little plot of ground unseeing. When he found his neighbors' fences badly in need of repair, their gardens overgrown with weeds, their children neglected, he was sure the good folk did not know the right way, and he felt within himself the power to help them towards better things.

So keenly alive had the man become to the ignorance, the misfortune, on all sides, that he could scarcely allow himself a moment of rest. The haunting consciousness of the pain of the world rose between his eye and the pages of his book. He saw it in the flowing stream—felt it in the sunlight—listened for its insistent reminder in every strain of music. The realization of the suffering of the many gripped his very soul and would not loose its hold.

How dared he let himself go even into slumber, when perhaps a projected thought of his might lighten the load?

At break of day he knocked on his neighbor's door, at noon he carried food and water to those who toiled in the fields. The sick, the aged, the stricken, watched for his ministrations; but still the knowledge of others' misery robbed the man of peace.

"There must be something more that I can do." He spoke restlessly to her who dwelt ever by his side; and the woman with ready sympathy glanced up from weeding their own garden-plot.

"Surely not, beloved; surely you are doing enough. You are but one man—God cares for the world!"

"But through us. Ah—now I understand! The talent he entrusted to me! The gift of song—I will lift up my voice by the wayside!"

Then the man left the woman weeding their garden and stood without the gate, and as he lifted up his voice in song, those who passed by stopped to listen, whispering one to the other,

"What manner of man is this, and what is the burden of his song?"

"Do you not hear the message?" The woman lifted her head a moment and spoke to those who gathered around the singer. "He sings of the pain of the world."

"Yes, we hear," answered the toilers. "This is he who brought us water at noon-day;" and one who was blind crept nearer to clasp the hand of the singer.

"He is from the Master—the song is for us—he understands!"

And from that time many of those who came to listen to the song dwelt with the singer. She who labored in the garden-plot ministered unto all.

Then it was that a sudden inspiration came to the man. He saw himself as in a vision gathering the army of the desolate and going upon a great pilgrimage. Banded thus, they would be strong to carry the message of deliverance to those who suffered in other lands.

Thereupon early and late the man sang by the wayside and a great light shone in his eyes as the company of those who were to fare forth with him grew into a mighty throng.

"But you are destroying yourself," the woman pleaded; "you are worn to a shadow—you never sleep. It is too great a price to pay, beloved. God does not ask so much from one man. You cannot carry the whole world. Think of yourself!"

"Afterwards," he answered steadfastly, "afterwards I will rest."

The woman's eye wandered sorrowfully over their little plot of ground which all her efforts could scarcely keep clear of encroaching weeds.

"Beloved," she faltered, "we are a part of the rest—you and I."

"I am a child of God." He glanced where the road wound towards the sunset. "I must fare forth!"

So he gathered his neighbors, and with the company of those who had listened to his song, they left their own gardens and went rejoicing upon the great pilgrimage.

Now many years passed ere the man returned again to his own. He had succeeded, according unto the measure of his hope,—he had helped to lift the burden of the world. Therefore did his voice ring out joyously as at the head of the pilgrim army he was borne with shouts of triumph along the familiar road—hailed as a savior of men!

Eagerly among the welcoming multitude his eye sought her who once had dwelt by his side. Brightly and with confidence his thoughts returned at last to the one who had made no demands upon them—the woman who had no needs—yet she came not forth to greet him!

Now the pilgrims passed a garden-plot choked with weeds and wild grasses. Once there had been a hedge, but now the thick underbrush grew out into the highway and the tangled trees hid the home-

stead. Yet something strangely familiar about the neglected garden half awakened fragrant memories stifled in the stress of later years. The leader spoke to those who bore him and all that mighty throng surged and pressed against the hedge—yet the woman came not forth.

"Where is she?" the man cried in sudden, dreadful doubt—and through the host a murmur swept and swelled, "*Where is she?*"

But ere the echo of that cry had hushed an aged wayfarer tottered from the deserted garden and the multitude listened as their leader sprang to embrace him:

"Father—Father! Lean on me!"

"At last, my son!" the old man faltered. "At last—and alas, my son!"

"But, Father! Why do you weep? Behold the vast company of the saved!"

The old man turned his face sorrowfully towards the garden choked with weeds. "I see only this plot," he murmured brokenly. "Here have I dwelt these many years."

"Dwelt—*here?*" the other repeated in bewilderment. "No—but in thy home—and with her who always kept the garden well. Why is not she too here to welcome? Why do you not both rejoice with me, Father, in this my hour? Waste no more thought on this plot of weeds. To-morrow we will find the owner of the garden and help him restore his home."

"Too late, my son! Have you indeed forgotten? The man whose home it *was* is here."

"What! The plot is yours, dear Father?"

"Poor boy!" The old man fell upon his son's neck and clasped him close. "After all, only my poor boy—blind to his own! How we both have loved you—she and I. The plot is yours, my son!"

The singer shook with sudden fear and strained forward, peering into the dense foliage.

"Father!" he gasped in trembling anguish. "*Where—is—she?*"

The old man drew himself upright, leaning both hands upon his staff. "While her strength lasted, she kept the garden well, as you have said, my son; and when her strength was gone"—he led the man by a twisted path deep into the heart of the underbrush—"she waited for you—*here.*"

Blindly the singer stumbled into the little clearing and cast his eyes shudderingly to the ground. In agonized memory, he who went forth to save the world fell upon the grave that marked the spot where once his home—and *hers*—had stood.

How many years—how many years since he had left his own!

"Beloved," she had faltered on this very spot, "we are a part of the

rest—you and I. You are destroying yourself. It is too great a price to pay!"

And he had answered, obsessed only by his mission, "Afterwards—I will rest."

Afterwards! Was this their *afterwards*? The murmur of the multitude reëchoed in his stricken heart, "*Where is she?*"

The man stretched wide his arms over the mound. "'It is too great a price to pay, beloved.' . . . Ah, verily I know—I know! My empty heart bears witness for the heart I set at naught—too great a price, beloved—even for the pain of the whole world!"



WHEN A GREAT MAN DIES

BY CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

THE flags are hung half-mast to-day,
But they'll all be high to-morrow!
This is the big world's cruel way,
Ah! this is how we sorrow!

A moment's grief, a brief delay
From plough and field and furrow—
The flags are hung half-mast to-day,
But they'll all be high to-morrow!

We mourn one hour, we pause to pray
(Sad prayers that we must borrow!)
One little while we softly say
Poor words of pain and sorrow;
The flags are hung half-mast to-day,
But they'll all be high to-morrow.



MAN, MERE MAN

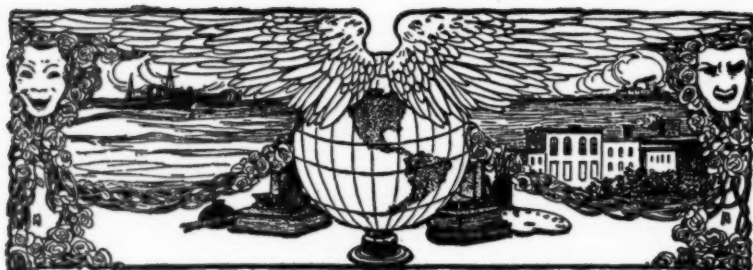
FLATTERY is a counterfeit that vanity cashes.

PUBLICLY to praise a noble deed is to take part in it.

THE average man feels innocent of any crime of which he cannot be convicted.

A WISE and brave man may thrive on ill-luck; a fool may drift to disaster on a tide of fortune.

Peter Pry Shevlin



WAYS OF THE HOUR

A DEPARTMENT OF CURRENT COMMENT AND
CRITICISM—SANE, STIMULATING, OPTIMISTIC

FEED THE CHILDREN

NEWSPAPERS and charitable institutions in all our large cities agree that there are hundreds and thousands of children who go to school unfed or ill-fed, to say nothing of those babies not included in the school census, and yet there seems to be a remarkable impotency in dealing with the question. To speak figuratively, we stand around sucking our thumbs like befogged imbeciles.

As fast as some remedy is suggested, some one offers an objection, whereupon we forget the children and take up the pros and cons. If it is suggested to give them food, some one objects that that would pauperize them or that in this way children who did not deserve food might get it. For that matter, all children deserve food, whether their parents are intemperate and improvident or not.

If it is suggested to provide for them out of the public treasury, some eminent attorney or legislator, as shrewd as he is heartless, objects that such a method is illegal. At other suggestions, so-called professional charity-dispensers object that the suggestions are not scientifically formulated.

Rot! It is strange that we, as a people, cannot attack a question directly, without beating around the bush, without ceremony and red-tape. A hungry child cannot wait until its case is carried up to the Supreme Court. A hungry child wants food and wants it quick. The thing to do is to get the food.

Where shall we get it? Wherever it happens to be. How shall we pay for it? Never mind. We'll settle that later. We have all winter for that.

That's the way they did it in San Francisco at the time of the earthquake. That's the way we did it when there was a famine in China. That's the way we do it after every big calamity or holocaust. The first thing we do on such occasions is to deliver the goods. The question of pay does n't primarily enter. A well-fed child, however, is a good investment for the future. We can wait for the dividends.

Like those instances, this is an emergency calling, not for debate, but for emergency measures. Laws are as sand in the face of an emergency. These children must be fed, whether they are black or white, Catholics, Jews, Protestants or infidels, foreign or native. They are the next generation. They are our successors. Upon them is the burden of the race. As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined. As the child is well nourished, it will grow into beautiful manhood and womanhood. If it is neglected, it will grow into ugly brutehood, and all society will suffer as a consequence, you and I and our children.

Feed the children. Don't stand around asking how. If your house were afire, you would not call an investigation committee to discuss the best way of putting it out. You would turn in the alarm and go to work. Whether you had ever thought much about fires or not, you would attack that fire instantly, with whatever knowledge you already had at hand. You would know enough at least to throw on water. From a scientific standpoint, you might make mistakes, but the fear of mistakes never justified any man in supine indifference. We all make mistakes, all the time. We learn by our mistakes.

So with the children. What they need is food. No mistake about that, and we cannot make a mistake if we get it to them in a hurry. Many of them need warm clothing and a corner near a hot stove besides. Let the authorities provide these things. Do it now. Later we can tell where the mistakes were, and we can do better next time.

When we had a panic in Wall Street our national authorities took \$150,000,000 out of the public treasury and rushed it to New York. The act was not sanctioned by law, but it was supposed to be for the public good. Perhaps it was and perhaps it was not. But the point is, that it was an emergency, and the authorities did the obvious thing without thought of law. What the banks needed was money. Let the authorities do the obvious thing now. What the children, the little, helpless, blameless children, need is food. They can't wait. The house is afire. Get the food to them. There is plenty to be had. Borrow, beg, or steal it and give it to them. Don't stand on ceremony. Feed the children.

ELLIS O. JONES

THE BLIND SPOT

IN all vision there is a blind spot; every savant is a fool upon some topic. This is exemplified by the readiness with which the most astute business and professional man will dabble in speculation—such as mining and allurements similar.

What man of ordinary common-sense would think of buying a house which he had never seen and his agent had never seen; or a horse, or a gun, or almost anything into which he is putting money, without privilege of examination and expectation of using that privilege? And yet the majority of men will invest, "sight unseen," as the boys say, in a mine, in an oil well, in a rubber plantation, merely upon the word of a machine-made prospectus.

Somehow, ninety-nine out of a hundred men who thus invest, as a side issue, seem to anticipate that chance will overlook their utter disregard of business principles, and will work a miracle in their favor. They go upon the theory "A fool for luck." This is why speculation of this nature is fallen into evil ways, and why a gold mine so often proves a gold brick.

The public has itself to blame. Mines, oil-wells, rubber plantations, can be made sources of profit, and are made sources of profit; but they should not be played as one plays a slot-machine.

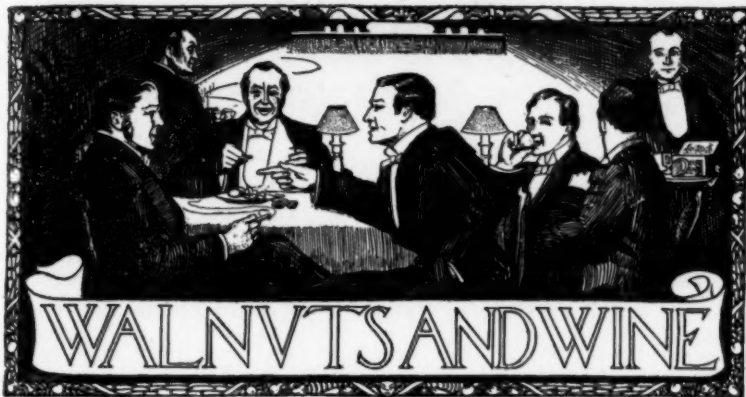
EDWIN L. SABIN

ON THE MAKING OF GOOD RESOLUTIONS

THE gibes of the comic papers have gone far towards bringing into disfavor the good old custom of "turning over a new leaf" on the first of the year. Yet, taken all in all, was n't the making of good resolutions on this day of days a good thing for everybody? Of course there was much backsliding—to err has not ceased to be human—but most of the resolutions were adhered to at least for a time, during which the makers were in all probability the better therefor. So don't hesitate to make good resolutions New Year's time. One good one would be, not to encourage other people to break theirs.

R. T. H.





MR. SNICKER'S BREAKFAST

Mr. Snicker is well-known in his home town as the most facetious man in seventeen counties. His method of expressing what ideas he has is entirely along lines of pure jocosity, but now and then his wit falls upon unappreciative ears. On a recent visit to New York Mr. Snicker arrived rather early in the morning, and the pangs of hunger would brook so little delay that he went immediately upon his arrival to a prominent hotel in the vicinity of the station for his breakfast.

"Good morning, Henri," he chortled in his usual salubrious manner to the waiter, as the latter hung his hat on a hook over his table. "Has the butcher come yet?"

"Ze what, sir?" asked the waiter with a puzzled look on his face, for he was not used to Snickers.

"The butcher," said Snicker, with a merry wink in his left eye; "you know—the chap who brings the food. I thought perhaps——"

"Wait one moment, sir," said the waiter, his perplexity growing deeper. "I will bring ze head waiter, sir."

"Oh, never mind," Snicker began, but the waiter had departed, to return in about three minutes with the head waiter.

"What is it, sir?" asked the latter, with a great show of civil interest.

"Oh, nothing," returned Snicker, rather sheepishly. "I just asked Henri here if the butcher had arrived yet, fearing that possibly——"

"The butcher, sir?" repeated the head waiter, like his subordinate very much mystified.

"Yes," said Snicker, with a faint smile which he hoped the head waiter would find contagious. "I was only jok——"

Walnuts and Wine

"Wait till I find ze superintendent," said the head waiter courteously. "I have no doubt we can accommodate Monsieur if we can only find out what it is that he wants. I will send for him."

Snicker again started in to explain the mere facetious bearing of his inquiry, but the head waiter too had sped away in search of a superior officer who might be expected to be equal to this new and unexpected emergency. Several omnibus boys and Snicker's waiter as well were despatched to the kitchen and elsewhere to find him, but apparently without success. Five, ten, fifteen minutes elapsed, and Snicker began to feel that it did not really pay to be as funny as he could under all circumstances. Finally, however, the head waiter returned and courteously explained that the superintendent had not yet arrived at his post of duty, but that he had telephoned up to the office for the manager of the hotel, who he assured him would be down in a very few moments.

"He is rather busy at this time of the morning, sir," he vouchsafed, "but he said he would be down right away."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Snicker ruefully. "You'd better head him off if you can. You see, when I asked if the butcher had come yet, it was only meant as a joke——"

"Ah, here is the manager," interrupted the head waiter, as a tall, impressive gentleman with a majestic front loomed up in the dining-room door, and made his way across to Snicker's table. "This is the gentleman, Mr. Pingleton," the head waiter added, when the manager had reached Snicker's side.

"Good morning, sir," said the manager breezily. "I hope there is no trouble, sir. I am sorry to have kept you waiting, but this is the busy end of the day with me getting things started along, and our dining-room superintendent, I regret to say, is off duty this morning. What can we do for you, sir?"

"I—I—want a hard-boiled egg and some Lyonnaise potatoes," said Snicker.

John Kendrick Bangs

THE HIPLESS AGE

By J. J. O'Connell

From lovely woman's wiles we find

That there is no escape;

She's not content to change her mind,

But now she's changed her shape.

Walnuts and Wine

MARY'S WEDDING

A Maryland man recently married off his fourth daughter, the ceremonies touching whose wedding were given much attention by the "society editors" of the country papers in that region.

A week or two after the wedding a friend who had been north for some time met the father, to whom he made some jocular references in regard to the recent "event." "I see by one paper," said he, "that Mary's wedding 'well nigh beggared description.'"

"Well," said the old man, "I don't know about that, but I do know it well nigh beggared *me!*"

Elgin Burroughs

AN INTRODUCTION

Harry was walking with another boy, when he was joined by a friend, a year or so older and inclined to manners.

"Introduce me, Harry," the new-comer whispered pompously.

Harry twisted, reddened, and at last turned to his companion with: "Jim, have you ever seen Gilbert Spencer?"

"No," the other boy answered.

"Well," Harry blurted out, reddening still more, and jerking one thumb over his shoulder towards the new-comer, "that 's him!"

K. O. Hamilton

THEY'D BETTER

By Robert T. Hardy

Now that Taft is going there,

They of course

Must the Presidential Chair

Reinforce!

A NEEDED CHANGE

The Navy Department recently received from the commander-in-chief of the fleet an official communication relative to certain changes recommended by him to be made in the uniform shirt of the enlisted men. In accordance with custom this letter was forwarded to various officials for comment or expression of opinion, the remarks of each officer being appended on an endorsement slip. Each endorsement introduces the subject matter of the letter in a brief, and one of them thus tersely explained the contents: "Commander-in-Chief desires to change shirt."

Henry Williams

Walnuts and Wine

THE XMAS CYNIC

Smiley: "Merry Christmas!"

Cynic: "Same to—say, pay me that dollar you borrowed last week, will you?"

Charles C. Mullin

AN ABORIGINAL VIEW

By Minna Irving

He was a youthful Indian,
A brave from 'way out West,
An eagle-feather in his hair,
A blanket o'er his breast,
And walking up and down Broadway
He viewed with much amaze
The quills upon the ladies' hats,
Dame Fashion's latest craze.

His wonder slowly changed to scorn;
He spake with high disdain:
"I look for feathers in the locks
Of all your braves in vain.
But now I know" (he heaved a sigh
Of obvious relief)
"The white man's way is different;
The squaw is heap big chief."

WHY HE LOOKED HAPPY

Admiral Schley was going through the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington one day, showing a little girl relative of his the famous paintings. Standing before a painting of Daniel in the Lions' Den, the little girl noticed that on the face of Daniel there was a seraphic smile, and she wondered at it. The lions looked to be hungry, and there seemed nothing to prevent them from eating him up, so she turned to the Admiral and asked this question,

"Why in the world does he look so pleasant when he knows that the lions are going to eat him?"

Having in mind some long-winded speeches he had listened to at banquets, the Admiral replied,

"He is looking pleasant, because he knows there will be no speeches after this dinner."

Charles A. Sidman



Make that Cold Room a Cozy Den

In nearly every house there is one room that is extremely hard to heat—it is therefore practically closed for the winter. This room can be made the coziest room in the house with no trouble by the use of the

PERFECTION Oil Heater

(Equipped with Smokeless Device)

This heater gives intense heat, with no smoke, no smell. Turn it as high as you can to light it, as low as you can to extinguish it. Easy to clean, easily carried from room to room. Nickel or Japan finish. Every heater guaranteed.

The **Rayo Lamp** is the best lamp for all-round household purposes. Gives a clear, steady light. Made of brass throughout and nickel plated. Equipped with the latest improved central draft burner. Handsome—simple—satisfactory. Every lamp guaranteed.

If you cannot get heater and lamp at your dealer's, write to our nearest agency.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY
(Incorporated)



Walnuts and Wine

HE HAD HIS PRICE

Rounder: "My wife has joined the Anti-Saloon association, so I was induced to stay at home last night."

Bounder: "How in creation did she induce you to stay in?"

Rounder: "She had a case of beer sent to the house!"

Charles C. Mullin

IN THE DIVORCE COLONY

The little De Jones girl is talking to her playmate, Lucy van Smith.

"Oh, Lucy," said she, "we have a new papa!"

"Have you? What's his name?"

"Mr. Hayes."

"Oh, pshaw! we had him, too, but we did n't like him."

Sarah Francis

A BUM BUGLER

By Birdie Baxter Clarke

A Bugler once tried to bugle "Tattoo."

The bugle was old but the bugler was new;

The troops were encamped in a wild sylvan glade,

And the echoes played tag with the discord it made.

The Colonel, a jolly old cavalry file,

Thought "Stables" was blowing; aroused with a smile,

Turned sleepily over, and murmured, "I guess

That bugler's been drinking again, more or less."

A veteran Captain who'd heard war's alarms

Sprang into his trousers and yelled out, "To Arms!"

The sky-pilot, robed in pajamas of white,

Said, "Why's that blank 'Church Call' a-blowing to-night?"

The medico, late from a man that had snakes,

Thinks "Sick Call" is blowing, and suddenly wakes

And utters some swear words—I fear eight or ten—

And vows he 'lows Grady has got 'em again!

A Shavetail Lieutenant, just out of the Point,

With chills in his gizzard and aches in each joint,

Thinks "Mess Call" is blowing and suddenly shoots

Full out of his blankets and into his boots.



The Positioning Pins and Perforated Blade

A SAFETY razor should be safe. You can't have safety if there is any way for the blade to slip. The blade must be absolutely secure.

With a "safety" razor you have a removable or interchangeable blade. You can slide it in position—the difficulty is to keep it there!

Clamps and springs are uncertain. A spring weakens with use. There must be no variation—no vibration—nothing left to chance.

You can't be trusted always to see that you have placed the blade exactly in alignment.

There must be something to prevent your placing it any other way—something

to insure the blade being held in exact position with relation to the guard.

The GILLETTE is the only safety razor that does not attempt to clamp the blade by one or more of its sides (a razor blade as hard and slippery as glass) and to hold it by the pressure, or spring principle.

A GILLETTE blade has three round perforations. When you drop it over the three positioning pins it can't slip. It can't get away. The blade is in perfect alignment. You can't place it out of position if you try.

How it is held there in a vise-like grip we shall explain another time.

There is no razor like the GILLETTE—no handle, no blade like it. Any man can use it. It makes shaving easy no matter how tough the beard or tender the skin. No stropping, no honing.

Standard set \$5.00. On sale everywhere.

New York, Times Bldg.

Chicago, Stock Exchange Bldg.

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Gillette Safety Razor

NO STROPPING NO HONING

Walnuts and Wine

Top Sergeant rolled out, as a deluge splashed o'er,
And snatched up his blankets from out of the pour
As a Corporal near him thought "Fire Call" blew,
And would fain quench the blaze with a bucket or two.

Then a man just turned in from his quarterly spree
Fell out of his blankets and cursed "Reveille";
While a rook,* just enlisted, with thoughts homeward bent,
Thought sure 't was the "General" † and pulled down his tent.

In the mean time the bugler that caused the uproar
Went back to the guard tent and bugled once more;
And tried as he smoothed his curly red pate
To think what had kicked up the rumpus so great.

But the regiment's baby, a few tents away,
Snuggled closer to mother to sleepily say:
"What's 'at call, mother dear, a-sounding such noise?
I sh'd think they'd know better 'n to wake little boys!"
But mother says, "Hush-a-bye, baby dear, do!
It's just a bum bugler a-blowing 'Tattoo'!"

THEY TRIED ANOTHER KIND

It was Sunday evening and there was a lot of company.

David's mother had sent him upstairs to get some plum jam for supper.

It took the lad a long time to get to the third floor, but when he did reach the closet where the jam was kept, it took him even longer to get started back—not that he was afraid, but that he was somewhat interested in the jam.

Finally he returned with his face and hands somewhat the worse for plum jam.

His mother took the sticky jar and surveyed him critically.

"Did you eat any jam?" she asked.

"Yes 'm," was the lad's reply.

"And what did you do with the stones?" she asked again.

"I put 'em back in the jar," he answered innocently.

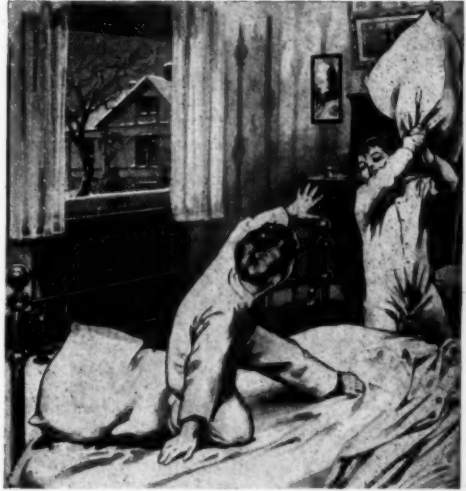
Herbert Pullinger

* Soldier parlance meaning recruit.

† The "General" is blown when the troops are breaking camp. When this call is blown, all the tents are pulled down together.

Fresh-air heating

All fathers and mothers agree that if any of the family deserve or need a room that is just right to sleep in and to play in, it is the children. It means so much to their futures to surround their youth with the pure and healthful conditions which come from well-warmed and ventilated rooms.



AMERICAN & IDEAL RADIATORS & BOILERS

for Hot-Water and Low-Pressure Steam Heating warm the air without robbing it of its purity. There is no scorched air, no ash-dust, no coal-gases, or cellar-gases to work injury

to the health, as arises from the use of old-fashioned heating methods.

In many cities and in some states the law now compels that all newly built schools shall be warmed and ventilated by Steam or Hot Water. If your child is thus wisely, sanitarily protected in school, why not yourself adopt this right way of heating your home, since the prices are now so reasonable, and the outfits can so simply be put into homes already built?



IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators are a substantial paying investment, as they will outlast the building. Their purchase will increase the sales and rental value of the building, and they will soon repay their cost in savings of fuel, labor, repairs, and in the lessened house-cleaning and wear on carpets and furnishings.

A No. 020 IDEAL Boiler and 262 ft. of 38-in. AMERICAN Radiators, costing the owner \$185, were used to Steam heat this cottage, at which price the goods can be bought of any reputable, competent Fitter. This did not include cost of labor, pipe, valves, freight, etc., which installation is extra and varies according to climatic and other conditions.

Write today for valuable book (free). Five months of cold weather still ahead! Sales Offices and Warehouses throughout America and Europe.

DEPT. 36

AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

CHICAGO



In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

HIS LITTLE DIG

Wife: "Is there any difference between a fort and a fortress?"

Husband: "Not much, except, of course, that a fortress must be harder to silence!"

R. Rochester

EQUALLY GUILTY

The proprietor of a certain hotel in Maine is not only one of the kindest and best hearted of men, but also one of the most profane. He swears without knowing it and means no offense. He spends but little time in the office and is practically unknown to many of the guests. One day, however, he was in conversation with the manager when a lady interrupted them.

"I want my room changed," she said. "It is on the side overlooking the kitchen, and I am annoyed by the swearing of some man down there every morning. I am a church woman and will not stand it another day."

The remarks were addressed to the manager, for she did not know the proprietor or that the one who did the swearing was he.

"Do you happen to know who that man is?" he asked, before the manager could reply.

"No, I do not," she answered.

"Well, I do," the proprietor continued; "and he does n't mean any more when he swears than you do when you get down on your knees to pray."

Lewis A. Wentworth

ALMOST AS GOOD

Little Ikey came up to his father with a very solemn face.

"Is it true, father," he asked, "that marriage is a failure?"

His father surveyed him thoughtfully for a moment.

"Well, Ikey," he finally replied, "if you get a rich wife it's almost as good as a failure."

Frank H. Williams

POPULAR IN HER TOWN TOO

"I love grand opera!" exclaimed the lady from Pittsburg, as they listened to the opera in New York. "Who is the composer of this one?"

"The great Wagner," was her friend's reply. "He's very popular here!"

"So he is in Pittsburg. He's on our baseball team, you know!"

Charles C. Mullin

Walnuts and Wine

MENNEN'S

BORATED TALCUM

TOILET POWDER



"BABY'S BEST FRIEND"

and Mamma's greatest comfort. Mennen's relieves and prevents Chapped Hands and Chafing. For your protection the genuine is put up in non-refillable boxes—the "Box that Lox," with Mennen's face on top. Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act, June 30, 1906, Serial No. 1542. Sold everywhere or by mail 25 cents—Sample free.

Try Mennen's Violet (Borated) Talcum Toilet Powder—it has the scent of Fresh-cut Parma Violets—Sample Free.

GERHARD MENNEN CO., Newark, N. J.

Mennen's Sen Yang Toilet Powder, Oriental odor. No samples.

Mennen's Borated Skin Soap (blue wrapper), specially prepared for the nursery. No samples.

} Sold
only at
Stores.

Sent free, for a cent stamp to pay postage, one set of Mennen's Bridge Whist Tullies, enough for six tables.

In writing to advertisers, kindly mention LIPPINCOTT'S.

Walnuts and Wine

HE GOT IN AHEAD

In Basin, Wyoming, a few years ago, there was a plot hatched to hold up the Basin bank. In some way the story leaked out and the plan fell through, but one day, after it had been abandoned, the principal who had planned the hold-up stood outside with two of his friends looking wistfully through the window at the cashier. After a time he said mournfully to his pals:

"It would n't have been no use nohow, boys; he's got it all."

Caroline Lockhart

FATE

By L. C. Davis

It's been my observation in
This world of strife and worry,
You always break your shoe-string when
You're in the biggest hurry.

DIPLOMACY

Harold visits on terms of intimacy a household that boasts of three good-looking sisters—Betty, Babbie, and Ellen—and of these Harold has not yet quite made up his mind touching a certain important contingency.

On one occasion, when he had called early, and no one was yet down-stairs, Harold was half-dozing in a Morris chair in the library, when suddenly a pair of soft little hands covered his eyes and a sweet little voice commanded:

"Guess who!"

Immediately Harold was up a tree. He could n't for the life of him determine whose voice it was—Betty's? Babbie's? Ellen's? A wrong guess would mean complications too awful to contemplate. Finally, however, a happy solution of the difficulty offered itself, and Harold blandly announced:

"It's the dearest, sweetest little girl in all the world!"

"Dear Harold," murmured the young thing, as she removed her hands.

E. T.

THE LIMIT

"Carson's the most absent-minded chap I ever saw."

"What's he been doing now?"

"This morning he thought he'd left his watch at home, and then proceeded to take it out of his pocket to see if he had time to go home and get it."

R. Rochester

Thomas Moran Sketching at Grand Canyon of Arizona

A large painting of the Grand Canyon of Arizona, by Thomas Moran, N. A., hangs in the National Capitol at Washington, D. C.

Mr. Moran was the first American artist of note to visit this world's wonder. He still frequently goes there to get new impressions. In his summer home at Easthampton or in his New York City studio, usually may be seen several canyon canvases under way.

Quoting from Chas. F. Lummis, in a recent issue of *Out West* magazine: "He (Moran) has come nearer to doing the Impossible than any other meddler with paint and canvas in the Southwest."

Other eminent artists also have visited the titan of chasms. They all admit it to be "the despair of the painter."

You, too, may view this scenic marvel as a side trip on the luxurious and newly-equipped

California Limited

en route to or from sunshiny California this winter.

Only two days from Chicago, three days from New York, and one day from Los Angeles. A \$250,000 hotel, El Tovar, managed by Fred Harvey, will care for you in country-club style. Round-trip side ride from Williams, Ariz., \$6.50.

Yosemite also can be reached in winter from Merced, Cal., nearly all the way by rail.

Write for our illustrated booklets: "Titan of Chasms" and "El Tovar."

W. J. Black, Passenger Traffic Manager
A. T. & S. F. Ry. System
1118-M Railway Exchange, Chicago

Walnuts and Wine

HOW A BOY QUESTIONED FIELD'S WORTH

Years ago a small boy who was working in Marshall Field's wholesale house conceived the idea that he ought to have a raise in his salary. He was then receiving four dollars a week, and he believed he was worth five dollars. He asked the manager of his department for a raise, but was refused. Not daunted, he went to the next higher authority, only to be again disappointed. He continued to run the complete gamut of managers, until his only hope lay in going to Mr. Field himself with his request. One morning he lay in wait outside Marshall Field's private office, and when the merchant prince arrived, immediately waylaid him and stated the case to him. Mr. Field listened patiently to the boy's story, but a stern look came over his face.

"See here, my boy, you are paid four dollars a week now, are you not?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," the boy answered, "but I'm worth five dollars to you."

"When I was considerably older than you I was only getting three dollars a week, and I think you ought to be satisfied with four dollars," said Mr. Field.

The youngster saw all his hopes dashed to the ground. Tears of disappointment came to his eyes, and he blubbered:

"Well, perhaps you was n't worth more than three dollars a week."

Marshall Field laughed. The boy got his raise.

Saint Nihal Sing

PLENTY GOOD ENOUGH

Aunt Chloe was burdened with the support of a worthless husband, who beat her when he was sober, and whom she dutifully nursed and tended when he came home bruised and battered from a fighting spree.

One Monday morning she appeared at the drug store and asked the clerk for "a right pow'ful linerment foh achin' in de bones."

"You might try some of this St. Peter's Prescription, Aunt; it's an old and popular remedy, cures cuts, bruises, aches, and sprains. One dollar the bottle. Good for man and beast."

Aunt Chloe looked at the dollar bottle and then dubiously at her flat purse. "Ain't yo' got some foh fifty cents?" she ventured. "Some foh jes' on'y beasts. Ah want it foh ma ol' man."

Charlton Lawrence Edholm

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We have set aside the first limited edition for distribution among our customers at a special introductory price. This means that if you order now, you can save about half the regular price.

With each set one year's subscription to Lippincott's Magazine (regular price \$2.50) is included.

This Coupon Entitles You to a Set at the Special Low Price

Cut out and mail the coupon to us with one dollar—in currency, or money-order, or check—and the full set of eight volumes will be forwarded to you prepaid. The balance of the introductory price of \$12.00 may be paid at the rate of one dollar a month.

Order Now!

Remember that the edition is limited—and only the first edition goes at the low introductory price. Twelve dollars (\$12.00) pays for the books and the magazine—but to be sure of a set at these prices, you should act at once. Mail the coupon today, while you are thinking about it.

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MASTERSPIECES," half leather binding, including one year's subscription to
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Walnuts and Wine

WHAT THE SECRETARY LIKED

A well known Washington editor was walking in front of a leading hotel recently when Secretary Luke Wright hailed him for a chat.

"By the way, Blank," said the Secretary, "I saw several mighty good things in your paper yesterday."

"I'm glad you liked them," said the editor, beaming with satisfaction. "It always helps an editor to find out what his readers like. What were the articles you liked?"

"The articles," said the Secretary earnestly, "were three fat mince-pies wrapped up in your yesterday's issue."

Karl von Kraft

PHILOSOPHY

By L. C. Davis

"A setting hen will not grow fat,"

But then what in the dickens

Would anybody care for that

If she just hatches chickens!

POOR UNCLE ED

A Baltimore man was recently showing his nice new opera-hat to his little nephew, and when he caused the top-piece to spring open three or four times the youngster was delighted.

A few days thereafter the uncle, during a visit to the same household, brought with him a silk hat of the shiny, non-collapsible kind. When he was about to leave the house, he encountered the aforesaid youngster running down the hall with what looked like a black accordion.

"Uncle Ed," observed the boy, "this one goes awfully hard. I had to sit on it, but even then I could n't get it more than half-shut."

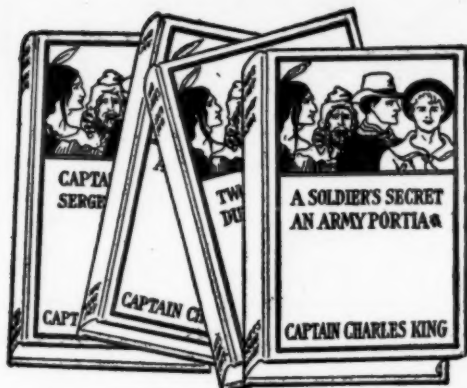
Edwin Tarrisse

HEARD IN THE DIVORCE COURT

"Your Honor, I don't think I should be obliged to live with this woman any longer," said the dispirited and dyspeptic little man who was the plaintiff in the case. "Her cooking is something dreadful, biscuits like clods and her coffee is mud! Why, to every cupful there is half a cup of grounds!"

But the Judge's ruling was that half a cupful was insufficient grounds for divorce.

Charlton Lawrence Edholm



Free with Lippincott's Magazine

"Captain" King's captivating novels of army life have charmed countless thousands. He is the prince of army romancers. To-day his books are read and re-read by multitudes. Zest and plot, action and character drawing, love and intrigue, heroism and patriotism—all lead his readers with intense fascination through every page. These books are worth reading and worth owning.

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'T is sugar that 's the cane.

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K. J. Murray

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"And what lesson are you to study for next Sunday?" her mother asked.

"Nuffin' much," said the four-year-old rather scornfully. "Her jest said to learn all about the catakissin'—and me knowed that already."

Pearl Payseur Poore

AS TO HIS CHEST

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"Oh, 'bout seventy inches."

"Impossible!" exclaimed the doctor, in disgust.

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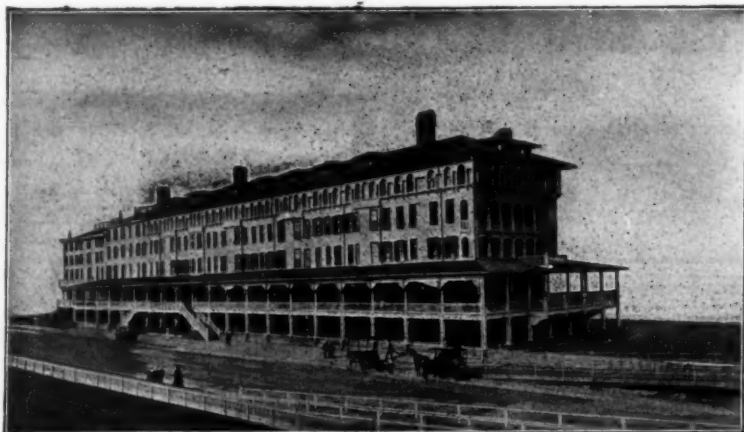
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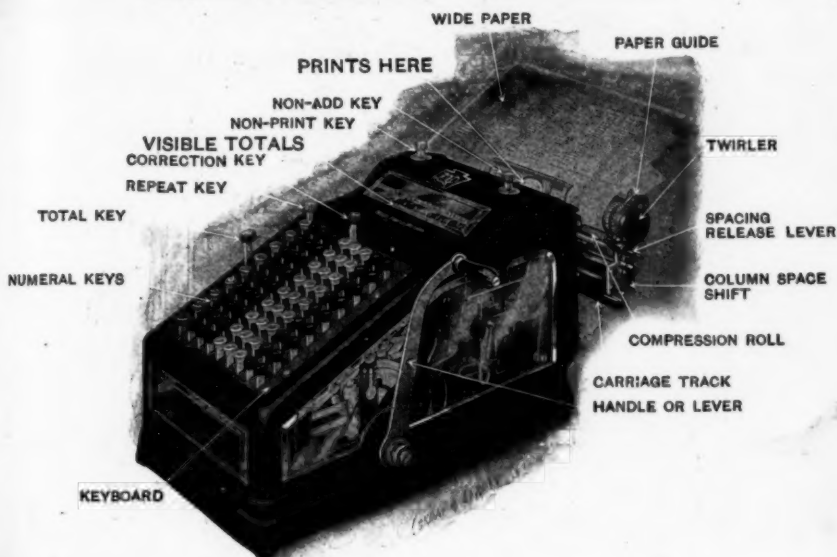
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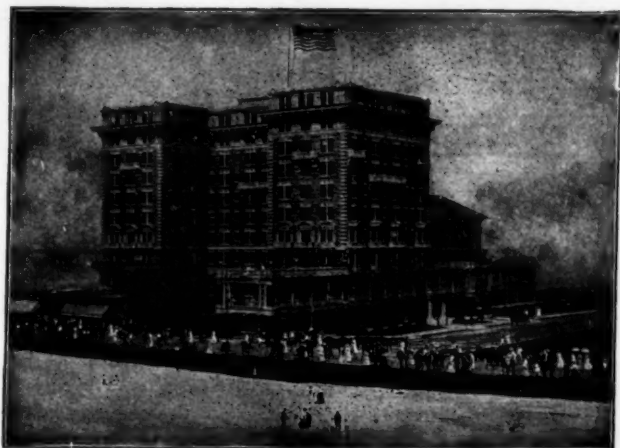
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